

THE
CIVIC AND ARCHITECTURAL
DEVELOPMENT
OF PROVIDENCE

JOHN HUTCHINS CADY

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The
Civic and Architectural
Development of Providence



R.I.H.S.

Rhode Island State House

The
Civic and Architectural
Development of Providence

1636 - 1950

by
JOHN HUTCHINS CADY, F.A.I.A.

*And having in a Sence of Gods mercefull providence
unto me in my destresse called the place providence
I desired it might be for a shelter for persons distressed
for Conscience . . .*

Roger Williams

THE BOOK SHOP, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

1957

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PROVIDENCE, R. I.

PROVIDENCE is one of the oldest cities in America. It has an important heritage covering more than three centuries. While many of its ancient landmarks have been sacrificed to the march of civic progress, and many of its traditions almost lost to memory, the atmosphere of early years is still retained in some old sections of the city. This tangible evidence of the city's cultural and architectural past is a present-day asset of great significance.

In the past few decades there has been a growing understanding of the value of protecting the monuments of our nation's past. The Providence Preservation Society was organized in 1956 to help safeguard our local heritage. Our new society is fully aware of its responsibility for the protection of the city's historic sites and buildings. It is also conscious of the need to make them part of the life of today and of the future. We hope that the plans which are now being developed under a Federal Grant for Urban Renewal will result in a significant experiment in community rehabilitation and at the same time will be the means of "protecting, improving and making proper use of" some two hundred and fifty Colonial and Federal dwellings still standing in the confines of the original town area, known as the Providence Neck.

One of the Society's aims has been the publication of a book giving an account of the architectural treasures of the city. As a fulfillment of this aim, we feel honored to have the opportunity of endorsing *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence*, which John Hutchins Cady, the Society's Historian, already had in preparation. It contains an important analysis and evaluation of Providence architecture as well as a description of the city's physical growth and development. Mr. Cady's broad interests as an architect, a pioneer in city planning and a student of the nation's architectural history have amply qualified him for the task he has set for himself.

The Preservation Society believes that this comprehensive study of Providence from its original settlement in 1636 through three hundred and twenty years of subsequent development will be invaluable not only to local residents but to all concerned with the continuous history of civic and architectural change. The book should stimulate a knowledge and appreciation of the city's historic and architectural worth.

ANTOINETTE F. DOWNING
for the Providence Preservation Society



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Preface

THIS history had its inception in an address, entitled "The Architectural and Civic Development of Providence," delivered by the author at the Second Annual Institute of Art, held under the auspices of the Community Art Project, sponsored by Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design, in Faunce House Theatre, Brown University, November 24, 1933.

It describes the town's physical growth, through its chronological periods of development, from the settlement in 1636 to the birth of modern city planning in 1950; and it is projected, in some instances, beyond the mid-century in order to show more recent trends in contemporary architecture, and to record initial steps in civic projects resulting from the new planning technique.

Part I of this volume, in its original form (later revised), was published serially in *Rhode Island History*, 1943-45, under the caption "The Development of the Neck."

When the manuscript was in its initial stages the author was privileged to receive the advice and counsel of Mr. Norman M. Isham and Mr. Howard M. Chapin, whose published works and word-of-mouth information concerning the early settlement and the Colonial period were of significant aid.

Acknowledgment is also made to Mr. Clifford P. Monahan and Mr. Clarkson A. Collins, 3rd, of the Rhode Island Historical Society, for assistance in research and in the assembling of illustrations; to Mrs. George E. Downing, Professor and Mrs. Benjamin C. Clough, Mr. Robert N. Cool and Mr. Paul F. Gleeson for reading the manuscript and making helpful suggestions; to Mr. Frank H. Malley, Mr. Harvey Flint and Professor Albert E. Simonson for reviewing and correcting certain sections of the text; to the City Engineer's department for supplying maps and plats; and to the author's brother, William H. Cady, for assistance in proofreading.

And, finally, the author's thanks are extended to the Board of Trustees of the Providence Preservation Society for their endorsement of the book.

J. H. C.

*Did you ever hear the story told
Of Roger Williams, the preacher bold,
That settled this State in the days of old
This little State of Rhode Island?.....*

Charles T. Miller, 1874.

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Abbreviations of Most-used References

A.&R.	Rhode Island Acts and Resolves
Arnold	Samuel Greene Arnold, <i>History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations</i> (New York, 1859).
Bronson	Walter C. Bronson, <i>The History of Brown University</i> (Providence, 1914).
C.C.	City Council.
C.D.	<i>City Document</i> .
C.E.	City Engineer.
Chace	Henry R. Chace, <i>Owners and Occupants of the Lots, Houses and Shops in the Town of Providence, Rhode Island, in 1798</i> (Providence, 1914).
C.M.	<i>City Manual</i> .
C.O.	City Ordinances
Dorr	Henry C. Dorr, <i>The Planting and Growth of Providence</i> (Providence, 1882).
E.R.P.	<i>Early Records of the Town of Providence</i> , collected and printed by the Record Commissioners (Providence, 1892–1915).
Field	Edward Field, <i>State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History</i> (Boston, 1902).
Greene	Welcome Arnold Greene, <i>The Providence Plantations for Two Hundred and Fifty Years</i> (Providence, 1886).
Hopkins	Charles Wyman Hopkins, <i>The Home Lots of the Early Settlers</i> (Providence, 1886).
Isham	Isham and Brown, <i>Early Rhode Island Houses</i> (Providence, 1895).
Kimball	Gertrude Selwyn Kimball, <i>Providence in Colonial Times</i> (Boston, 1912).
P.B.	<i>Plat Book</i> .
P.L.	Public Laws.
P.S.H.	Plats of Streets, Highways &c, indexed in <i>Fourth Report of the Record Commissioners relative to the Early Town Records</i> (Providence, 1895).
R.I.C.R.	<i>Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England</i> , edited by John Russell Bartlett (Providence, 1856–1865).
R. I. Hist.	<i>Rhode Island History</i> , publication of the Rhode Island Historical Society (1942 <i>et seq.</i>).
R.I.H.S.C.	<i>Rhode Island Historical Society Collections</i> (1918–1941).
R.I.H.S.P.	<i>Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society, New Series</i> (1893–1900).
Staples	William R. Staples, <i>Annals of the Town of Providence</i> (Providence, 1843).
Stone	Edwin M. Stone, <i>The Life and Recollections of John Howland</i> (Providence, 1857).

Maps and Illustrations

THE Daniel Anthony maps of 1803 and 1823 and the city directory maps of 1870 and 1899 are reproductions of originals. The Providence maps for the years 1700, 1750 and 1850, and the four Rhode Island Boundary maps (reproduced from Rhode Island Boundaries, 1636-1936) were prepared by the author from documentary records and drawn by William A. Perry, staff artist of the State Planning Board, 1935-36. The Proposed Public Improvements map is by courtesy of the City Plan Commission. The other maps were drawn by the author.

The illustrations marked R. I. H. S. are by courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Sources of other illustrations are as marked. Photographs not otherwise identified are by the author.

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Introduction

HENRY VII of England established a claim to the territory of New England following the voyages of John Cabot in 1497–1498. The first permanent colony was settled by the Pilgrims at Plymouth in 1620. The Puritans were granted a charter by Charles I, in 1629, creating the Massachusetts Bay Company with control of territory extending from sea to sea, its north and south bounds, at their easterly ends, following lines located, respectively, three miles north of Merrimack river and three miles south of Charles river. Under a Royal patent, granted in 1629, the bounds of the Plymouth colony were defined as including all of New England south of the Bay Company's territory (a line extending, roughly, from the south shore of Boston bay southwesterly to Blackstone river north of Pawtucket falls) and east of the center line of "the river called Narragansetts," identified as the sequence of the present Blackstone, Seekonk, and Providence rivers, Narragansett bay, Mount Hope bay, and Sakonnet river. The Plymouth Colony was merged with the Bay Colony in 1691.

Two years after the settlement of Massachusetts Bay Colony, on February 9, 1631, the ship *Lyon*, 66 days out of Bristol, England, arrived in Boston harbor. Among the passengers were Roger Williams, a young chaplain of 28, and his wife, Mary Barnard Williams. Roger was born on Cow Lane, London, in 1603, the son of James Williams, a merchant tailor, and Alice Pemberton Williams. He received his education at Pembroke College, Cambridge, graduated with honors in 1626 and, subsequently, was admitted to orders in the Church of England. His theological ideas proved to be too liberal for adherence to that church, however, and he elected to share his lot with other dissenters in New England.

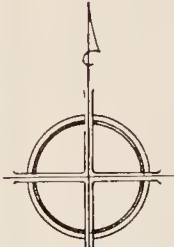
For two years after his arrival at Boston Roger Williams preached, successively, at Salem and Plymouth, at the same time cultivating the friendship of the Indians and learning their language. He returned to Salem, in 1633, as pastor of the First Church where his doctrine of freedom in religious worship and other radical opinions resulted in a summons to appear before the General Court of Massachusetts by whom, in October, 1635, he was adjudged guilty of having "preached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates."

Williams was not unprepared for the sentence of banishment which followed. Through his intercourse with the Indians he already had made negotiations for a settlement near the head of Narragansett bay, a spot suggested to him by Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts. His departure was postponed until the following spring, by consent of the Court, on condition that he should not, in the meantime, "draw others to his opinions." As that condition appeared to have been violated Captain John Underhill was commissioned, early in 1636, to apprehend him and deport him to England. In order to avoid seizure Roger Williams left Salem hastily, in the night time, and fled into the wilderness.

MASSACHUSETTS

A Map
of the State of
RHODE ISLAND
showing
TERRITORIAL
BOUNDS
for the Years
1636-1659
Prepared by the
State Planning Board
John H. Cady - Consultant
1936

1 2 3
MILES



Twenty Mile Line 1659

PROVIDENCE

Bounds as extended, 1659
Moswansicut Pond

LOQUASQUUSUCK

Wayunhehe Hill

Walling's Pond

Pawtucket River

Pawtucket Falls

1ST SETTLEMENT PROVIDENCE 1636

Neutaconhanut Hill

Moswansicut River

MASHANTUOCH

1ST SETTLEMENT 1642

Called SHAWOMET until 1648

WARWICK

PLYMOUTH COLONY

HOPE

POCASSET

SAKONNET

NARRAGANSETT COUNTRY

Cocumcussuc Trading Post circa 1639

ATHERTON'S QUIDNESSET PURCHASE 1659

ATHERTON'S NAMCOOK PURCHASE 1659

PETTAQUAMSCUTT Purchased 1657

Great Pond

NEWPORT settled 1639

PORTSMOUTH Settled 1638

Island of Rhode Island Named 1644 formerly Aquinnuck

Line Established 1640



BLOCK ISLAND

MANASSET

ATLANTIC

DOCEAN

CONNECTICUT

PEQUOT COUNTRY

Western Boundary according to Charter

MISQUAMICUT

PART I

The Neck

CHAPTER I 1636 - 1676

EARLY in the year 1636 Roger Williams, an exile from Massachusetts, started from Salem on a pilgrimage to found a colony that would be free from religious control. Accompanied by William Harris, John Smith, Francis Wickes, and Thomas Angell he steered his course in a southwesterly direction, through snow and ice, arriving in April at a spot on the shore of Ten Mile river, near its confluence with Seekonk river.¹ Several weeks were spent there during which time other followers of Williams arrived from Salem, among whom were Joshua Verin, William Arnold, Benedict Arnold, William Carpenter, Thomas Hopkins, and members of their families.²

Roger Williams wrote concerning the settlement: "I first pitcht & begun to build & plant at Secunk: But I recd a Letter from my ancient friend Mr Winslow, then Govr of Plymmouth, professing his owne & others Love and respect to me, Yet lovingly advising me (since I was fallen into the Edge of their Bounds, & they were loth to displease the Bay) to remove but to the other side of the Water,³ & then he said I had the Country free before me."⁴

Heedful of Governor Winslow's admonition Roger Williams set out, on a day in the early summer of 1636, to seek another spot. Accompanied by Thomas Angell he proceeded in a canoe down Seekonk river, paused on the opposite shore, at Slate Rock, to receive the greeting "What cheare Netop"⁵ from a group of Indians, rounded Fox Point, swung north on Great Salt river, passed through the narrows where Weybosset point projected from the westerly shore, entered a tidewater cove into which Moshassuck river flowed from the north and Woonasquatucket river from the west, and landed on the east shore near a fresh water spring.⁶

1. The spot, landscaped and marked in 1936 (page 268), is in the town of East Providence, which became a part of Rhode Island by an exchange of territory with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1862.

2. Howard M. Chapin, *Documentary History of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1916), pp. 11-16.

3. Seekonk river.

4. Letter from Roger Williams to Major Mason, June 22, 1670, original in Massachusetts Historical Society's collection.

5. Roger Williams, *Key into the Language of America* (London, 1643), p. 2. Slate Rock was buried to a depth of about 20 feet during re-grading operations in 1878. A monument on Roger Williams Square, at Gano and Power streets, marks the spot. See pages 146-147.

6. See map, page 10. The spring site, located at the corner of North Main Street and Alamo Lane, is marked by a well curb and tablets. See page 259.

THE NECK

Roger Williams surveyed the neck of land which he had skirted. A hill rose sharply, east of the spring, to a height of 200 feet. The descent to the east and south was more gradual. Thick forests covered most of the territory, with swamps at the lower levels.⁷ A brook flowed southerly through the neck, curving westerly, near its mouth, to discharge into Mile End cove.⁸ Between the bend of the brook and the southerly shore of the neck Foxes Hill rose to a height of about 40 feet.⁹ A gravelly beach extended from Fox Point northerly to the mouth of Moshassuck river.¹⁰

Having determined that the region was well adapted for a settlement Williams negotiated a purchase of land from the Narragansett sachems Canonicus and Miantonomi.¹¹ Shortly afterwards he and his followers abandoned their former settlement by Ten Mile river, moved over to the spring, and there planted the town of Providence. A clearing was made at the foot of the hillside, near the spring, where dugouts, wigwams or other primitive types of shelter were put up for habitations until the settlers were able to construct more permanent dwellings.

The purchase from the Indians was confirmed in a deed to Roger Williams, executed by the Narragansett sachems, Canonicus and Miantonomi, in March, 1637.¹² The territory acquired included the lands west of Seekonk river and the Great Salt river into which it flowed, its other bounds extending from "ye river and fields at Pautuckqut" southwesterly to "ye great hill of Notquonckanet" and then southeasterly to Pawtuxet river (see map page 3). In a memorandum dated May 9, 1639 Miantonomi confirmed the sale, including the lands "up the streams of Pautuckqut and Pawtuxet without limits" for the use of cattle.¹³ This was again ratified and confirmed in 1659 by Caujaniquante, the succeeding sachem, farther extending the territory to a line running north and south twenty miles westerly from Foxes Hill.¹⁴ The bounds of the town of Providence thus established practically coincided with the present bounds of Providence County west of Blackstone river.

The neck of land between Seekonk river on the east and the Great Salt river, the cove and Moshassuck river on the west, extending southerly to Fox Point, was called Moshassuck by the Indians. The settlers re-named it The Neck to distinguish it from the other lands of Providence; it is now known as the East Side (see map, page 14).

In 1638 Roger Williams executed the "Initial Deed," so-called, by which, for a consideration of 30 pounds paid him by the inhabitants, he made over equal power of enjoying and disposing of the lands he had purchased from the Indians to twelve "loving friends and neighbours," listed by their initials, and to "such others as the major part of us shall admit into the same fellowship." The date was not recorded on the deed but was inserted

7. The great swamp extended north from the present Sessions Street, between Hope Street and the Old Road in Swan Point Cemetery, nearly as far north as Pidge Street in Pawtucket. Cat Swamp was east of Arlington Avenue, between Everett Avenue and Freeman Parkway.

8. The brook, for most of its course, followed the line of Brook Street; Mile End cove was located where Bridge Street leads to Point Street Bridge.

9. A fort was established on Foxes Hill during the Revolution, later replaced by a resort known as Fox Point Observatory. The hill was leveled in 1875. See pages 52, 146.

10. South Water and Canal streets follow the original shore line. The mouth of Moshassuck river was at Smith Street.

11. "Be it knowne . . . that I Roger Williams of the Towne of providence . . . haveing in ye yeare one thousand Six hundred thirty ffoure and in the yeare one thousand Six hundred thirty ffive had severall treatyes with Counanicusse & miantenome the two cheife Sachims of the Narraganssett; and in ye End purchased of them the landes & Meadows upon the two fresh Rivers Called moshosick & Wannasquatuckett . . ." — *E.R.P.*, V, 306.

12. *R.I.C.R.*, I, 18.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid*, I, 35.

as of October 8, 1638, in a confirming deed executed by Williams in 1666, in which the initials were identified as those of Stukely Westcott, William Arnold, Thomas James, Robert Cole, John Greene, John Throckmorton, William Harris, William Carpenter, Thomas Olney, Francis Weston, Richard Waterman and Ezekiel Holliman.¹⁵ To each person admitted to fellowship there was allotted a home lot, a six-acre lot for planting, an extent of meadow or pasture land for cattle, and a tract of woodland, to an aggregate of about 100 acres.

On the same date on which the Initial Deed was executed an agreement was made between the same persons for a division of the meadow ground bordering on Pawtuxet river.¹⁶

The persons named in the two deeds were the enfranchised heads of families. They and their wives and children, and a few individuals who were not enfranchised, constituted the town's population at that time.

Some time in 1639 a Civil Compact was executed, the signers of which subjected themselves to "active or passive obedience" to orders made for the public good.¹⁷ The group included four young men — Thomas Angell, Francis Wickes, Edward Cope and Benedict Arnold — who had been members of the colony two years or longer, and nine new-comers: Richard Scott, William Reynolds, Chad Brown, John Warner, George Richards, Thomas Harris, Joshua Winsor, William Wickenden, and John Field.

On July 27, 1640, four arbitrators, appointed by the heads of families, presented a document known as the Combination, which defined the bounds dividing Providence from Pawtuxet, set up a form of government for the colony, and provided an arbitration plan for the settlement of legal difficulties.¹⁸ This was signed at the time of its adoption by 28 persons of whom nine were named in the Initial Deed, twelve were signers of the Civil Compact, and the others — Adam Goodwin, William Burrows, Robert West, William Field, Edward Manton, William Man, and Nicholas Power — were new-comers. Other signatures were added later including those of Robert Williams, Matthew Waller, Gregory Dexter, John Lippitt, Edward Hart, Hugh Bewitt, Thomas Hopkins, Joan Tyler, Jane Sears, Christopher Unthank, and William Hawkins.

A free grant of "Twenty five Akers of Land a peece with Right of Commoning" was accorded a group of later arrivals who signed an agreement in 1645 to obey all "wholesome Lawes & Orders," waiving the right to vote until received as Freemen. The signers included John Browne, Thomas Clemence, George Shepard, Robert Pyke, Mathurin Ballou, Thomas Walling, Lawrence Wilkinson, Daniel Comstock, Benjamin Smith, John Smith, John Clauson, Thomas Suckling, Benjamin Hernden, Edward Inman, Samuel Bennett, Edward Smith, John Fenner, Stephen Northup, Daniel Brown, Epenetus Olney, John Steere, George Way, Henry Reddock, and John Sayles.¹⁹

The settlement of Providence was a prelude to the acquisition of other lands from the Narragansett Indians (see map page 2). Roger Williams, together with Governor Winthrop of the Massachusetts Colony, purchased Prudence Island in 1637.²⁰ Williams also bought Patience Island, Hope Island,²¹ and a tract south of Pawtuxet river bordering on Narragansett bay,²² and established an Indian trading post at Cocumscussoc in the Narragansett Country²³ (near Wickford).

15. *R.I.C.R.*, I, 19-20.

18. *R.I.C.R.*, I, 28-31.

21. Arnold, I, p. 105.

23. Elisha R. Potter, Jr., *The Early History of Narragansett*, (Providence, 1835), p. 32.

16. *Ibid*, I, 20.

19. *E.R.P.*, II, 29.

17. *E.R.P.*, I, 1.

20. *R. I. Land Evidences*, I, 243.

22. *Warwick Deeds*, I, 110.

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In 1638 William Coddington, John Clarke and others purchased Aquidneck Island, in the lower part of Narragansett bay. Two towns were settled there, namely, Portsmouth (originally Pocasset) at the north end in 1638, and Newport at the south end in 1639.²⁴

Williams sold his land south of Pawtuxet river to Robert Cole in 1639. Benedict Arnold bought adjoining land to the west in 1641. John Greene purchased a tract known as Occupasspatuxet in 1642, extending from Cole's land southerly to Sowhomes bay (Occupasspatuxet cove). In 1644 Samuel Gorton and others bought the land south of Greene's purchase, known as Shawomet, extending southerly to include Shawomet Point (Warwick Neck) and westerly 20 miles from Narragansett bay.²⁵ Those lands later became the town of Warwick.

Upon application by Roger Williams, who visited England for the purpose, a patent of incorporation of "Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay in New England," uniting Providence with Portsmouth and Newport, was granted in 1643 by the Governor and Commissioners of His Majesty Charles I's subjects in America, acting under authority of the Lords and Commissioners assembled in Parliament.²⁶ The first "Generall Court of Election" under the patent was held at Portsmouth in May, 1647 at which time Warwick was admitted to the colony "with the same priviledges as Providence."²⁷

The few records that have been preserved shed but little light on the first allocations of land to the Providence settlers. Apparently the early inhabitants built their shelters at such places as were convenient and planted their corn on the old Indian fields as they could agree among themselves.²⁸ Reference is made in the "First Book of the Town" to payments required from certain persons to whom ground had been granted, subject to an additional assessment if they did not improve the land "by preparing to fense, to plaunt to build etc."²⁹ According to a later entry authority was vested in a committee of four "neighbors" to lay out "portions of grasse & medow" in the town's name and, at a town meeting June 10, 1638 the lands so allocated to seven persons named were confirmed as fully as portions previously appropriated by the committee to five others.³⁰ Not until the Initial Deed had been executed later in that year, however, did the persons admitted to fellowship in the colony receive title to the soil.

The first official survey of home lots, which included the layout of the Towne street, appears to have been made about ten years after the original allotment by a committee consisting of Chad Brown, John Throckmorton and Gregory Dexter.³¹ The original owners of the lands are named in a document, inscribed in 1660 by Roger Williams³² entitled "A revised List (saving Correction, with Addition) of Lands and Meddows, As they were orriginally Lotted ffrom the beginning of the Plantation of Providence in the Narragansetts Bay in New England, unto the (then) Inhabitants of the said Plantation, until Ann^d. 16." The lots were laid out upon a section of the Neck now bounded, approximately, by North and South Main, Wickenden, Hope and Olney streets.³³ The six-acre lots were located, some to the south and east of the home lots on the Neck and others south of Woonasquatucket river. The meadows lay between Woonasquatucket and Pawtuxet rivers.

24. *R.I.C.R.*, I, 52.

25. Chapin, *Documentary History of Rhode Island*, pp. 166-176.

26. *R.I.C.R.*, I, 143-146.

27. *Ibid*, 148.

28. Hopkins, 13.

29. *E.R.P.*, I, 3.

30. *Ibid*, I, 3, 4.

31. Dorr, 18.

32. Hopkins, p. vii.

33. Olney Street has been generally accepted as the northerly boundary of the lots. Actually it is about 100 feet north of the boundary, as proven by the allotment of land within the intervening area as part of the second division of lots in 1718. (Cady, "The Divisions of the Home Lots of Providence," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XXXI, 101.)

The map on page 10³⁴ shows the approximate locations of the home lots and their owners from 1638 to 1650. The lots extended in a row from the Towne street (North and South Main) over the hillside, terminating at a "highway," so-called, later identified as the highway at the head of the lots, now Hope Street. The sequence of lots was interrupted by two lanes now identified as Meeting Street and Power Street, respectively.³⁵ The lots, 52 in number, varied in width from 100 feet to 135 feet, in length from 1600 to 3000 feet, and in area from $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres to $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres. The Towne street followed the westerly shore of the Neck, northerly from Mile End cove, for most of its length at an elevation of a few feet above tidewater, bearing away from Moshassuck river, up a hillside (Constitution Hill) near its northern end.

The distribution of the home lots and farming lands to the settlers commenced in 1638. The first choice of lots was accorded the persons named in the initial deed and further allocations were made from time to time to new comers. There were numerous changes in ownership before the last lot was assigned; by 1650, according to the town rate of that year,³⁶ nearly one-half of the original owners had sold their lots and had either established their homes elsewhere in the town or had moved away. Of the 13 men admitted to fellowship under the Initial Deed only Williams, Olney, Waterman and Westcott were taxed for houses on their original lots in that year. Arnold, Harris, Carpenter, Cole and James had moved to Pawtuxet in 1638, Greene and Weston to Warwick in 1642, and Holliman to Portsmouth in 1643.

The earliest "civic center" grew up in the vicinity of the falls of the Moshassuck, a short distance north of the present Mill Street bridge, where the town grist mill was established in 1646.³⁷ John Smith, one of the original settlers, was a miller by trade. He was granted a home lot and erected a house on the Towne street but soon sold that property and removed to the Moshassuck valley. In 1646 the town granted him "the valley wherein his house stands in case he set up a mill."³⁸ Upon its erection the mill became the center of the town's activities. On every second and third day of the week it was used "for grinding of the Corne of the Town."³⁹ On other days it served as a place for informal gatherings by the townspeople and for occasional town meetings and religious services. The miller died about 1649 and was succeeded by his son, John Smith, Jr.

The civic center was further developed in 1655 by the establishment of a tannery, operated by Thomas Olney, Jr., a short distance east of the mill at the foot of the "Stampers," a hill formerly so-called rising east of Moshassuck river.⁴⁰ A highway leading to the mill

34. Principal sources of information: Hopkins, *The Home Lots of the Early Settlers*; Chapin, "The Lands and Houses of the First Settlers." *R.I.H.S.C.*, XXI, 1.

35. The identification of Hope Street as the original highway at the head of the lots is proven by surveys of the present Meeting and Power streets made in 1731-1738 (*E.R.P.*, IX, 59, 76.) The courses were measured in poles, a measure of length varying from 16 to 18 feet. On the basis of a $17\frac{1}{2}$ foot pole for Meeting Street and a $16\frac{1}{2}$ foot pole for Power Street the total lengths of Meeting Street (177 poles) and Power Street (134 poles), as established from the Towne street to the highway at the head of the lots, in 1731-1738, agree with the present lengths of those streets from North and South Main, respectively, to Hope Street.

36. *E.R.P.*, XV, 33.

37. Norman M. Isham, "The First Town Mill in Providence," *R.I.H.S.P.*, V, 192. See map, page 10.

38. *R. I. Land Evidences*, IV, 54.

39. *E.R.P.*, II, 42.

40. *E.R.P.*, II, 83. Stampers hill extended from the east bank of Moshassuck river to the present Carleton Davis Boulevard. "It has been handed down by tradition, that after the settlement of Providence, a body of Indians approached the town in a hostile manner. Some of the townsmen by running and stamping on this hill, induced them to believe that there was a large number of men stationed there to oppose them, upon which they relinquished their design and retired. From this circumstance the hill was always called Stampers' hill, or more generally, the Stampers." — Staples, 117.

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and the tannery was laid out at that time; it branched northerly from the Towne street at the foot of the hill and followed the lines of the present Mill, Bark and Hewes streets, swinging easterly to intercept the Common Road to Pawtucket, the northern extension of the Towne street (see map, page 14).

The office of town-constable was created in 1649 and the incumbent was provided with a staff denoting his authority. His duties included enforcement of the laws and the serving of warrants, and he was responsible for proper maintenance of land bounds and fences.⁴¹ Arthur Fenner was the first to hold office. The first liquor law was ordered in 1650, providing "that if any man sell any Wine or strong Liquors in his house, he shall also entertaine strangers to bed & board, but any man shall have his liberty to sell without doores no man forbidding him." In 1655 it was "ordered if any sell to any Indian a gallon of wine or liquors . . . he shall forfeit six pounds one halfe to ye informer ye Constable & his aide & the other halfe to ye Towne treasurie."⁴²

The town appropriated no funds for the maintenance of its highways in the early years. Instead it was ordered "that every man shall mend and make good the high way before his house Lot or Lots, within the Compasse of this neck, to that Carts may passe & repasse freely."⁴³ Later every man was required to work on the highways three days a year and furnish teams and oxen.⁴⁴

When the settlers undertook the erection of permanent houses they built them as near like the cottages of their forefathers as circumstances would permit. The only building materials available at the outset were raw native products. After a few years finished lumber, windows, doors, hardware and tools were procurable in Boston by those who could afford them, and by 1648 a lime kiln was established in the settlement.⁴⁵

The first houses were probably framed with hand-trimmed timber, the walls made of saplings or rough planks plastered with mud, the roofs covered with bark or thatch from the cove, and the bare earth serving as floor. The earliest chimneys were built of logs as stone construction involved skilled workmanship and the use of mortar. The settlers improved and enlarged these dwellings from time to time and by the middle of the century were erecting substantial stone-end houses similar in design to the Tudor-Gothic type of yeomen's cottages which had prevailed in parts of England since the 15th century.

The earliest Providence stone-end house of analytical record was erected by Roger Mowry about 1653, a little way east of the road to Pawtucket, on what is now Abbott Street and used, according to tradition, as an ordinaire or tavern. As the house was beyond the compact part of the town it escaped the ravages by the Indians in 1676 (page 12) and survived, in an altered and enlarged state, until 1900.⁴⁶ Originally it was a story-and-a-half high, resting on stone foundations, and consisted of a single first story "fire room" or "hall," 15 by 17 feet in area, with a great fireplace in one end flanked by a winding stairway leading to a chamber in the garret (see plan and illustration, page 9). The stone chimney occupied nearly the entire end of the house, and rose above the steep roof where it was capped with projecting stones. The other walls were clapboarded, the roof shingled, and the windows were small leaded casements. The fireplace was nine feet long, four feet deep and six feet high, quite ample for a fire in the center and for benches at the sides. A trammel bar extended lengthwise overhead, from which pots and other cooking utensils were suspended.

The Mowry plan typified the houses built in Providence up to 1676. The same plan was used in the first houses in Salem and Plymouth, but was soon modified in Massachusetts

41. *E.R.P.*, II, 40, 47, 111, 112.

44. *Ibid*, III, 62.

42. *Ibid*, II, 45, 83.

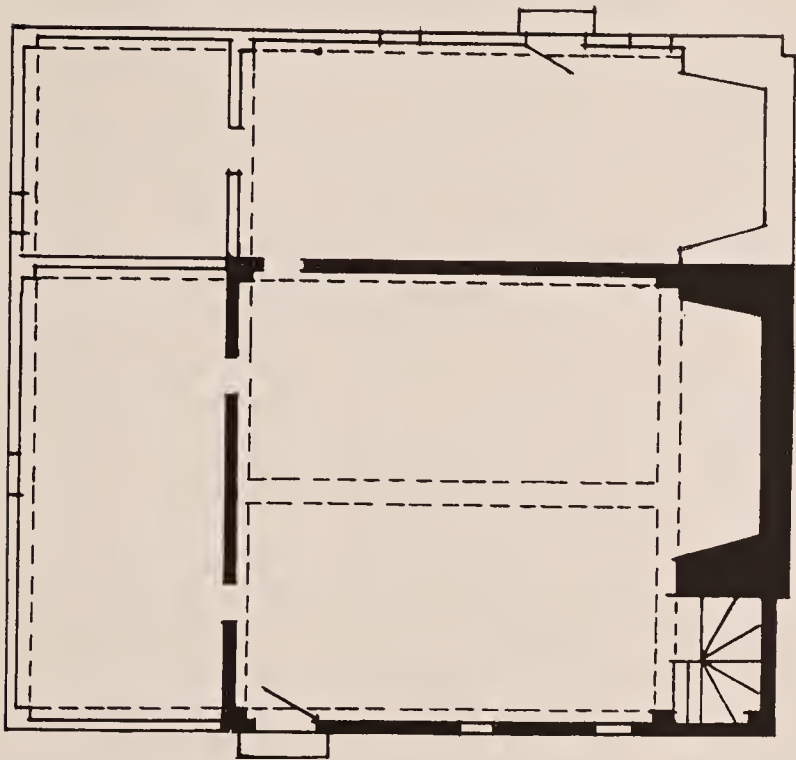
45. *Ibid*, XV, 12.

43. *Ibid*, II, 44.

46. Isham, p. 21.

by adding another room with a fireplace on the other side of the chimney and building a leanto at the rear (see plan A, page 46). The central-chimney plan was followed in some early instances in Newport and the Narragansett country.

Whatever their size or individual characteristics, which varied in accordance with the financial means of the owners, the abilities of craftsmen and the availability of building materials, early New England houses followed a uniform method of construction. The skeleton structure consisted of heavy timbers, framed and pegged one into another, including sills above the foundations, posts at the corners and at intermediate wall sections, horizontal girts carrying the second floor joists, and roof plates supporting the ends of the steeply-pitched rafters. To provide center support for the ceiling joists a large beam known as the summer was framed between the fireplace girt and the end girt. Outside walls were covered with boards, sometimes reinforced with studding.



Typical 17th century house plan showing its development from the early period (in black lines) to the later years of the century.



• RESTORATION •
ROGER MOWRY HOUSE

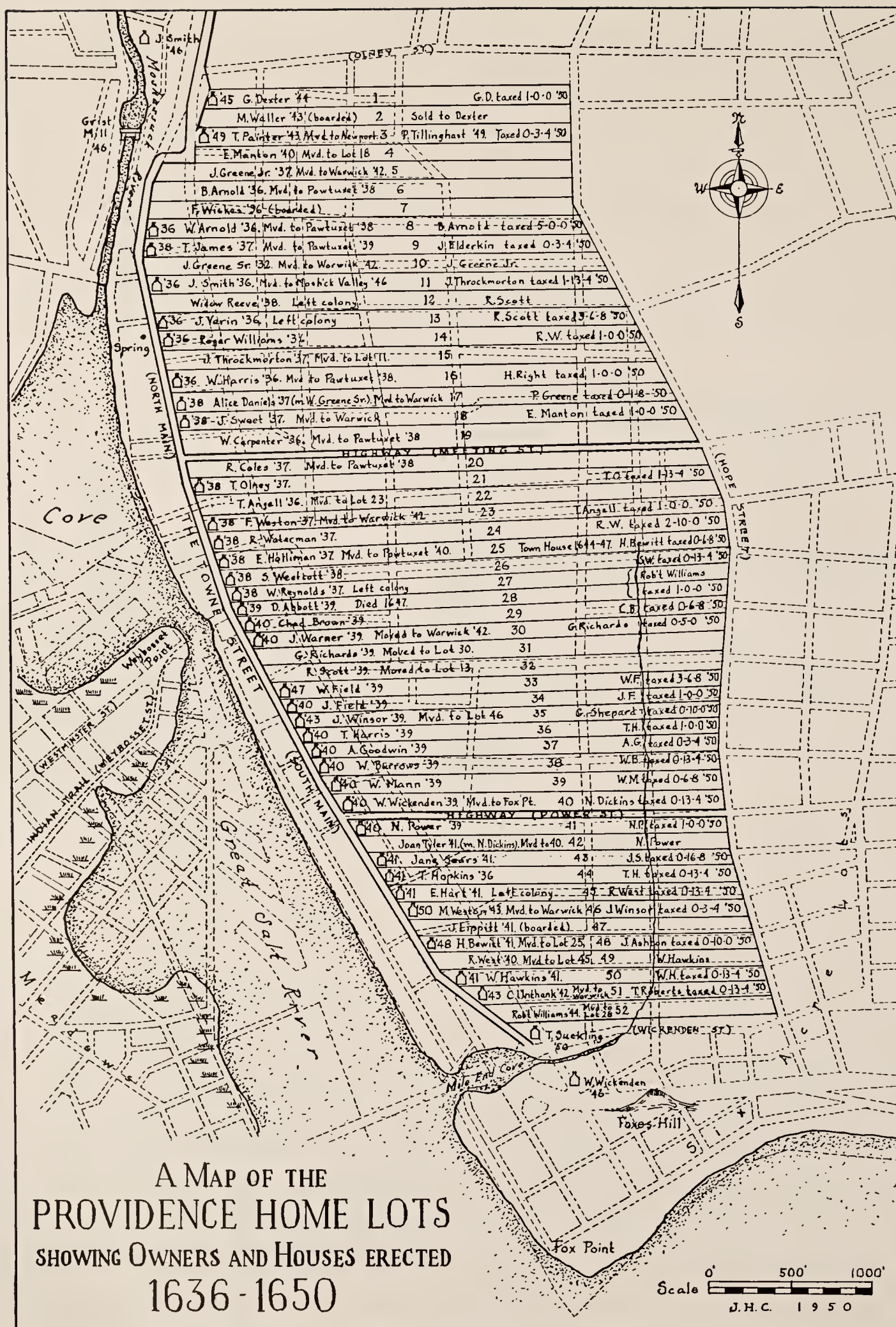
Roger Mowry house (1653), from Isham & Brown, *Early Rhode Island Houses*.

A tax levy was ordered by the town in 1649, the same to be collected by Hugh Bewett who held the office of town sergeant and treasurer.⁴⁷ The town rate recorded in 1650⁴⁸ indicates that 51 houses were then standing in the colony, including 34 on the home lots, eight elsewhere on the Neck, two on Weybosset side and seven at Pawtuxet. The house to survive longest was erected in 1647 by William Field. John Howland wrote⁴⁹ of his arrival by packet from Newport in 1770, landing at the wharf "opposite the place where the Providence Bank [50 South Main Street] now stands. On this lot there then stood the old garrison house, belonging to the family of Field . . . The lot was, in 1772 or '73 purchased by Mr. Joseph Brown [page 50]. The old house which stood thirty or forty feet east of the street, was then taken down. Many of its timbers were very large and sound, it having been built when the whole town was a forest and wood plenty." This

47. *E.R.P.*, II, 46, 47.

48. *Ibid*, XV, 33.

49. Stone, 24.



Dotted lines indicate highway pattern in 1950.

house, where town meetings were held frequently, was probably a replica of Mowrys'.

Roger Williams' house, the site of which is marked by a tablet at 273 North Main Street, had the same plan, as revealed when the foundations were excavated and measured in 1906.⁵⁰ Williams lived at his trading post in the Narragansett country (page 5) between 1645 and 1651 and may have enlarged or rebuilt his original shack when he returned to Providence. Little is known of the other houses on the home lots. Benedict Arnold paid the highest town rate and probably enlarged or rebuilt his father's house on the present Constitution Hill when he returned to Providence from Pawtuxet after his marriage. He lived here until 1651 when he moved to Newport, later becoming governor of the colony. A house built by Ezekiel Holliman and purchased by Hugh Bewitt in 1640 served as the town house from 1644 to 1647; a tablet at the street railway tunnel portal at the foot of Waterman Street marks the spot.

The house of Thomas Olney, the first town treasurer, was south of the lane that is now Meeting Street. Francis Weston built on the site of the First Baptist Meeting House; his estate was purchased after his death in 1645 by Thomas Angell, one of the original group of settlers. Richard Waterman, who gave Waterman Street its name, built within the present lines of that highway. Chad Brown, a surveyor, dwelt in the vicinity of the present College Street. Nicholas Power built on the south side of the lane now identified as Power Street. Gregory Dexter, a former London printer, and Robert Williams, brother of Roger, were allotted, respectively, the northernmost and southernmost home lots. Dexter, who later was town clerk and who served as president of Providence and Warwick,⁵¹ built on his lot. Williams, instead of building, purchased the house formerly erected by Daniel Abbott, north of Chad Brown. Pardon Tillinghast, an arrival of 1649, acquired a lot near Dexter's, allotted originally to Thomas Painter, where he built, later removing to the south end of the town (page 13).

The home owners on the Neck, outside the home lots, included Thomas Suckling and William Wickenden to the south, Arthur Fenner to the east, and John Browne, Christopher Smith, William Fenner and Mrs. John Smith, widow of the miller (page 7) to the north. Thomas Clemence and Thomas Slowe lived on their farms on Weybosset side.

The first bridge across Providence river was erected in 1660, at a cost of £160,⁵² connecting the shore of the Neck with Weybosset Point and the Pequot path (see map, page 14) and providing access to the meadow lands. Previously a ford in the river had been used as an approach to that path which led through Pawtuxet and the Narragansett country into the lands of the Pequots in Connecticut. Not long after the bridge had been built two of its trestles gave way and specifications were drawn for its reconstruction, as follows: "They are to make Timber worke in the forme of a square, diamond fashion which shall serve in the steed of those two Tressels that are downe, and shall rare it up in the river to make up the Bridge and lay sufficient Gice over the said diamond unto the other Tressels next it on both sides and to planke with planks untill it be sufficiently planked . . . and also to procure posts and railes and raile up the Bridge where the defects are, and also to set up new posts where they are wanting at the end of the Bridge as well at the owne end as the other . . ."⁵³ Further repairs were required, from time to time, and eventually the cost of its maintenance proved so great that the bridge was abandoned and was torn down

50. Isham, "The House of Roger Williams," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XVIII, 33.

51. The colony was disrupted, 1651-54, Portsmouth and Newport submitting to Governor Coddington's rule, and Providence and Warwick carrying on the government in accordance with the patent of 1644.

52. *E.R.P.*, II, 130.

53. *Ibid*, XV, 109

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or washed away. It was not until 1711 that another span was erected at that location (page 21) and the river ford was again used in the interim.

A bridge of smaller proportions was built across Moshassuck river, in 1662, where Randall Square is now located (see map, page 14), connecting the mill highway with the six-acre lots on the other side. According to the vote at town meeting in May of that year the bridge was to be completed "before the next hay tyme."⁵⁴

Charles II,⁵⁵ "by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c." granted a Royal Charter to the Rhode Island colony, in 1663, with the title "The Governor and Company of the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England in America." The charter, which superseded the patent of 1643 (page 6), was procured by John Clarke of Newport on behalf of the "free inhabitants of our island called Rhode Island,⁵⁶ and the rest of the colonie of Providence Plantations." It recorded the desire of the colonists "to hold forth a livelie experiment, that a most flourishing civill state may stand and best bee maintained . . . with full libertie in religious concernements." The charter named, as governor, Benedict Arnold who subsequently was elected by the freemen of the colony.⁵⁷

The east bounds of the colony (see map, page 20), as defined by the charter, extended from the ocean, a distance three miles east and northeast of Sakonnet river and Narragansett bay to a point three miles northeast of the mouth of Providence river, thence southwesterly to that river, thence northerly, through the center of Providence and Seekonk rivers to Pawtucket falls, thence due north to the Massachusetts line. The west bounds followed the center of Pawcatuck river northerly to its easterly bend, thence due north to the Massachusetts line. The overlapping of the east and west bounds of the colony, as defined by the charter, upon those established by the Plymouth patent of 1629 and the Connecticut charter of 1662, respectively, caused disputes which continued for many years before adjustments finally were made.

On March 30, 1676, Providence was attacked by the Indians. Previously a large proportion of the citizens had removed to Newport with their families and effects, leaving only 27 men to defend the town.⁵⁸ They established a garrison in William Field's house (page 9), the windows of which had been fitted with gratings; and while those men were successful in defending their garrison, the Indians burnt most of the other houses on the Towne street as well as the mill, the tannery, and the miller's house on Moshassuck river. John Smith, Jr., the miller, was then town clerk and the records were in his possession. "They were thrown from his burning house into the mill pond to preserve them from the flames, and to the present day they bear plenary evidence of the two-fold dangers they escaped, the two-fold injury they suffered."⁵⁹

A few weeks after the Indians' attack a King's Garrison of seven men was established in Providence, under Captain Arthur Fenner. No further fighting developed in the town, however, and the inhabitants gradually drifted back to Providence and commenced to clear away the ruins and to start rebuilding.

54. *E.R.P.*, III, 25.

55. Charles I was beheaded in 1649 and for the succeeding decade England was governed by the Commonwealth under which Oliver Cromwell held the office of Lord Protector, 1653-58. The throne was restored in May, 1660, when Charles II was proclaimed king.

56. At a General Court of Election held at Newport March 13, 1644, it had been ordered "that the Ysland commonly called Aquethneck [Aquidneck, page 5] shall be from hence forth called the Isle of Rhodes, or Rhode Island."

57. *R.I.C.R.*, II, 3-21.

58. *E.R.P.*, XV, 151.

59. Staples, p. 166.

CHAPTER 2 1676 - 1720

DURING the first forty years after its settlement Providence had been exclusively a community of planters. This was only natural, since food was the first consideration and the main supply could be obtained only from the soil.¹ The reconstruction period, after the Indian attack in 1676, marked the beginning of a commercial and industrial development. Shops were opened in the town in which farming tools, building materials, food, and clothing could be obtained. In addition to the grist mill and tannery, both of which were rebuilt, a saw mill and an iron works were established.

A ferry was put in operation across Seekonk river at Narrow passage, in 1679, for the accommodation of traffic over Indian trails to Boston and Plymouth. A franchise was granted to Captain Andrew Edmunds for that purpose by the town, as well as two acres of land whereon to build a house by the landing, where Red Bridge now stands.² Four years later the town surveyors were directed "with all convenient speede" to "state a highway" to the ferry.³ This extended from the Towne street to Seekonk river, following, approximately, the lines of the present Meeting, Hope, Angell, South Angell, and East River streets.

Although the waters of Narragansett bay had been used since the earliest years of the colony for traffic with Portsmouth and Newport, and for the occasional transportation of supplies and materials from other colonies, the potential resources of the sea were not at first evaluated as an asset to Providence. The sea trade, which was destined to become an important factor in the later development of the town, had its origin shortly after the settlement had been rebuilt. In 1680 Elder Pardon Tillinghast, who had moved from the north end of the town (page 11) to a lot north of the present Transit Street, originally owned by Hugh Bewett, was granted "a Little Spott of Land (against his dwelling place above high water mark) of Twenty ffoott Square, for ye building himshelfe A store house, with ye prieweladge of A whorfe Alsoe."⁴ This was the first wharf built in the town; others were erected along the water front in ensuing years, as far north as the present Market Square, by certain townspeople who foresaw more profits to be made from seafaring than from farming. Among their number were Arthur Fenner and his son-in-law, Gideon Crawford, whose wharves and shops adjoined one another just south of the present Crawford Street. Captain Fenner, a former lieutenant in Oliver Cromwell's army, settled in Providence about 1647 and was town treasurer 1672-73. He erected two houses, one on a large estate near Seekonk river⁵ and the other in the present city of Cranston.⁶ Crawford arrived in Providence in 1670, bought the John Field lot and built a house where the Old Stone Bank stands (page 127). Others who entered seafaring trade were Thomas Harris, Samuel Winsor, Samuel Whipple, Thomas Hopkins, Zachariah Field, Providence Williams, Peter Place, Ephraim Pray, and John Whipple, Jr. By the end of the century a trade was maintained with the West Indies and other colonies.⁷

1. Field, II, 389.

2. *E.R.P.*, VIII, 44.

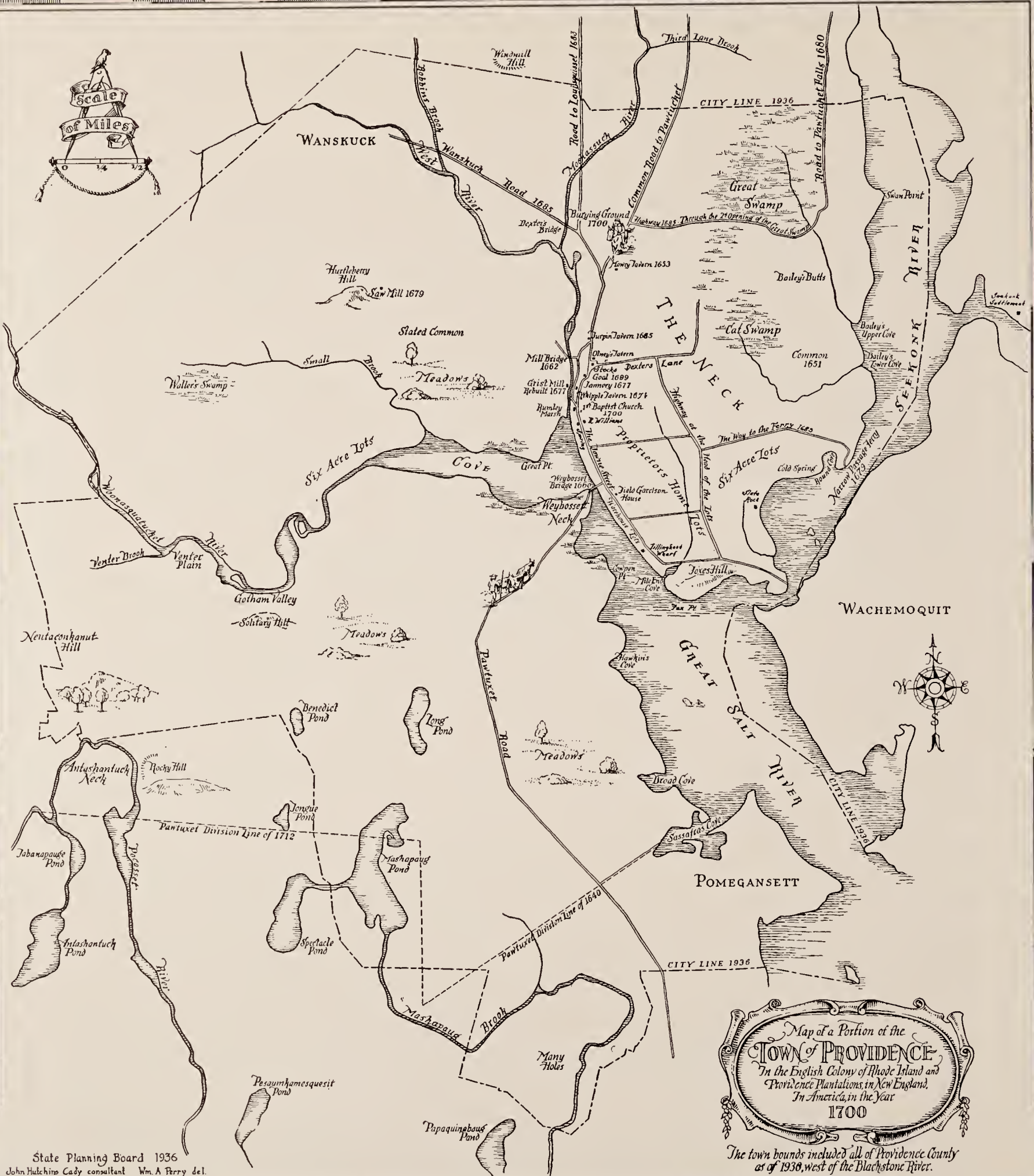
3. *Ibid*, 129. See map, page 14.

4. *E.R.P.*, VIII, 62. See map, page 14.

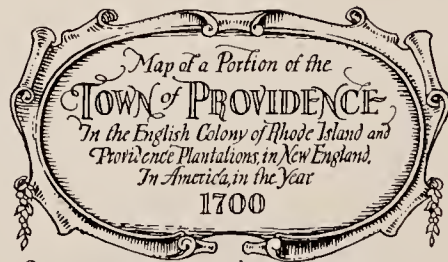
5. Kimball, p. 80. The house was located near the present Governor Street (see pages 11, 147).

6. Isham, p. 24.

7. Field, II, 395.



State Planning Board 1936
John Hutchins Cady consultant Wm. A. Perry del.



The town bounds included all of Providence County as of 1930, west of the Blackstone River.

In view of the increasing development along the water front by private owners the town determined to reserve certain of its water rights. Accordingly, in 1681, it was voted "that there shall be a sufficient highway kept for ye Townes use of three poles wide from the Towne street to ye water side, that ye Towne may if they see cause [which they did not] sett up a warfe at ye End of it."⁸ The location selected was opposite Weybosset Point, near the eastern end of the bridge which formerly had spanned the river there (page 11). The Towne street was becoming so heavily traveled that in the same year the General Assembly enacted the first traffic regulation, forbidding riding "a gallup on horse, gelding or mare, in the street lying against the great river . . . between the land of Pardon Tillinghast, and the northerly corner of John Whipple, Sen'r, where his dwelling house stands" in the north end, under penalty of a fine of five shillings for each offense.⁹

In order to provide access to the farms, located in the northerly part of the Neck, the town stated several roads during this period (see map, page 14), by which action certain cartways or trails, which already were in general use, were established or rectified. One of the earliest of these was the Common Road to Pawtucket which provided intercourse with Blackstone Valley. The year of its origin is unknown but it was referred to, in 1684, as "ye ancient & Comon Road."¹⁰ The town surveyor was directed, in that year, "in sum Convenient time [to] state ye Highway from the head of the lane Called Dexters lane [Olney Street] & so through the great swampe from ye said lane to runn at the place called ye first opening;"¹¹ Morris Avenue is its present name. And in town meeting, 1685, it was "Ordred that a highway shall be & Remaine from the Lane called Hearntons lane Eastward through the place called the second opening in ye great swampe & so to ye salt water about ye poynt called Swann poynt."¹² That highway is now Rochambeau Avenue from North Main Street as far as Blackstone Boulevard; from that point northeastward it was known, for many years, as the Neck road and, upon its abandonment by the city in 1933, became the property of Swan Point Cemetery (page 259).

A highway was ordered in 1683 "from ye Towne up into ye Countrey through Loquassuck woodes"¹³ which branched northwesterly, at the present Branch Avenue, from the Common Road to Pawtucket, followed Smithfield Avenue through Pawtucket, and continued on the lines of Cobble Hill Road and Louisquisset Pike in Lincoln. A road to "Wanskuck meadow" was stated in 1685, following Branch Avenue westerly from Smithfield Avenue.¹⁴

As Providence increased in size and importance more strangers had occasion to visit the town, and it became necessary to provide for their comfort and entertainment. In the earliest days the only lodgings available for visitors were in private houses and, as the accommodations of few of those houses exceeded two rooms, the guest quarters were neither sumptuous nor particularly private. The first tavern on the Towne street of which there is record was the one opened by John Whipple in 1674,¹⁵ halfway up Constitution Hill. This was followed by another, immediately north of the home lots, maintained by Epenetus Olney. In a more secluded spot some distance to the north (Abbott Street) Roger Mowry had, for some years, conducted an "ordinaire"¹⁶ in a house, erected in 1653, which survived until about 1900 (page 8).

8. *E.R.P.*, VIII, 106.

10. *E.R.P.*, VIII, 138.

12. *Ibid*, 139, 149. Benjamin Hearnden was owner of meadow and swamp land through which the lane ran.

13. *E.R.P.*, VIII, 132.

15. *Ibid*, IV, 8.

9. *R.I.C.R.*, III, 105.

11. *Ibid*, 142.

14. *Ibid*, 159.

16. *Ibid*, II, 22.

THE NECK

Toward the end of the century public houses were becoming more numerous and more commodious. One of these was built by Epenetus Olney, replacing his former tavern which had been destroyed by the Indians (page 12). It stood for many years and was the rendezvous for travelers over the Common Road to Pawtucket. The town stocks were erected on Dexter's lane, adjoining the tavern¹⁷ and close by a blacksmith shop was established by John Olney in 1699.¹⁸ Another tavern, opened in 1685 by William Turpin a short distance north of Olney's, within the present Carleton Davis Boulevard, was maintained for several generations and was used, at times, for sessions of the General Assembly and town meetings.¹⁹

The houses erected in the last quarter of the century retained the general characteristics of the earlier period but were of somewhat larger size. Although there are no survivals within the present corporate limits of Providence several are still standing in the outlying portions of the 17th century town which included all of the present Providence County west of Blackstone, Seekonk and Providence rivers. Three of these are of interest in showing the later development of the stone-ender (see plan, page 9).

The Thomas Fenner house (1677) at 1538 Plainfield Street, Cranston, originally was like Mowry's except that it had 2½ stories with fireplaces in the hall and the second story chamber;²⁰ it has been enlarged and modernized and is still used as a dwelling. The Thomas Clemence house (1680) at 38 George Waterman Road, Johnston, had only 1½ stories but included, in addition to the hall, a bed room adjoining it on the side away from the chimney, and a kitchen and bed room in a rear leanto. The hall and kitchen each had a fireplace, flanking one another in the stone chimney. This house, which had been enlarged and altered, was purchased by Henry D. Sharpe in 1938, restored to its original status by Isham in association with Cady,²¹ and given to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in 1947 (illustrations, pages 17, 18). The Eleazer Arnold house (1687) on Great Road, Saylesville, was similar to the Clemence house in floor plan but was 2½ stories in height (illustration, page 18). It was given by the Arnold heirs to the New England Society in 1918 and was restored under direction of Russell H. Kettell in 1951.²² The outside chimneys of these houses are well preserved although that of the Fenner house has a modern brick cap. The tops of the others have the original stone pilasters and water tables. The only original inside wood finish was the chamfering of the exposed timber edges and the moulded beading of the sheathed partitions.

English prototypes of these houses are standing in a part of Sussex from which certain Providence settlers emigrated (illustration, page 17). In the neighboring villages of Twineham and Wineham are several Tudor-Gothic 15th century cottages, similar in plan to the Rhode Island examples noted even to the dimensions of rooms and fireplaces, and differing only in having masonry exterior walls.²³

The 17th century closed with three public undertakings. The first jail was built on the Towne street, about 400 feet south of Dexter's Lane²⁴ (Olney Street). The first church edifice was built for the Baptist society, by Elder Pardon Tillinghast, at the present corner

17. *E.R.P.*, VIII, 142.

19. *Ibid*, XIII, 9; Staples, p. 602.

21. Cady, "The Thomas Clemence House, *R.I.H.S.C.*, XXXIV, 65.

22. Isham, p. 41; Kettell, "Repair and Restoration of Eleazer Arnold's Splendid Mansion," *Old Time New England*, XLIII, 2.

23. Cady, "The Stone-Ender from Sussex to Rhode Island," *Providence Sunday Journal*, Oct. 9, 1949.

24. Staples, p. 179. The location was between the present North Main and Benefit streets, near their junction.

18. *Ibid*, XI, 49.

20. Isham, p. 31.

1676 - 1720



Courtesy of *Providence Journal*

Thomas Clemence house (1680), 38 George Waterman Road, Johnston,
as restored 1938.



Courtesy of Dorothy Boykett

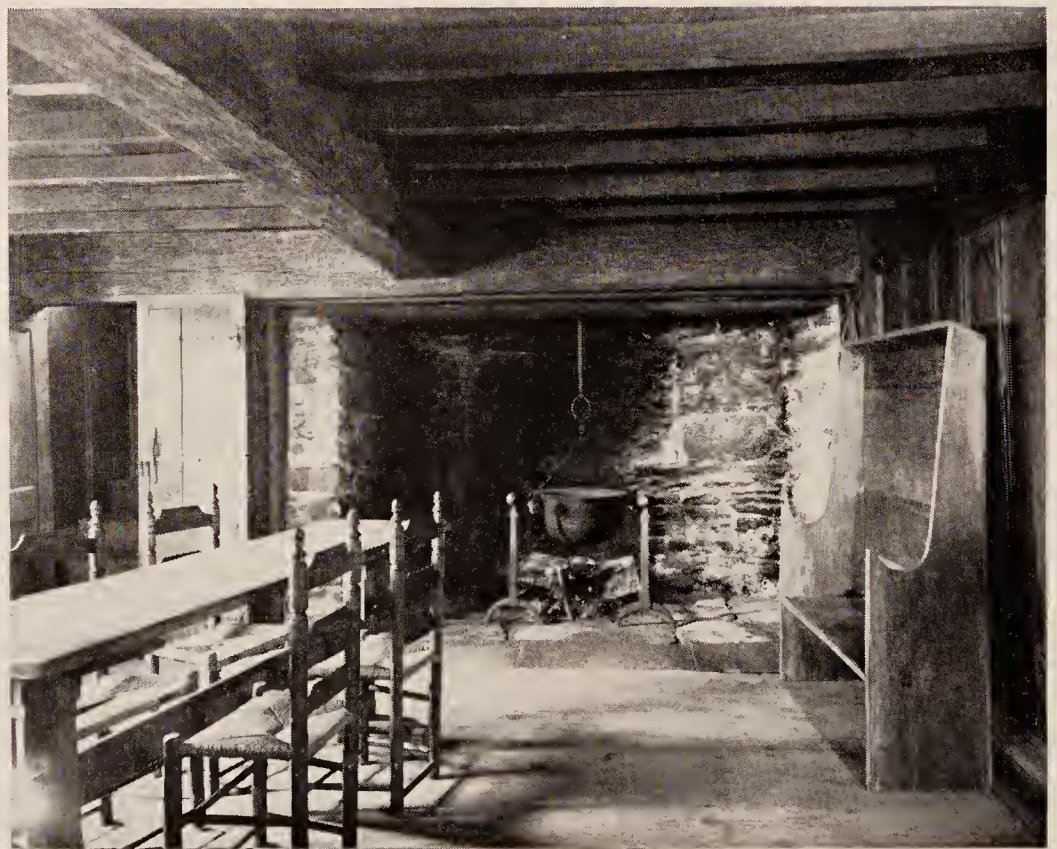
Fifteenth century cottage, Twineham, Sussex.

THE NECK



R.I.H.S.

Eleazer Arnold house, 1687, Great Road, Saylesville, as restored 1951.



R.I.H.S.

Fire room, Clemence house, as restored 1938.

of North Main and Smith streets.²⁵ And a tract of common land was ordered "for the use of millitarey affaires for training of souldiers & ctr; & also to a place to be for the use of Buireing of the dead,"²⁶ thereby establishing the North Burial Ground.

When the 18th century opened the colony of Rhode Island was composed of nine corporate towns whose relative standing in wealth may be inferred by the proportioning of a colony tax of £400 in 1701, as follows: Newport £112 10s, Providence £65, Kingstown £61 10s, Westerly £24, Warwick £23, Portsmouth £20, Jamestown £19, [East] Greenwich £13, and New Shoreham £12.²⁷ Newport's high rating was due to the sea trade in which her townspeople had engaged from the early years of the settlement. Providence, still principally a farming community, was just awakening to a realization of the potential resources of the sea.

By act of the General Assembly in 1703 the colony was divided into two counties designated, respectively, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, each having two inferior courts of common pleas.²⁸ Rhode Island County included Newport and Portsmouth on the island of Rhode Island (formerly Aquidneck), New Shoreham on Block Island, Jamestown on Conanicut Island, and the other islands in Narragansett bay. The county of Providence Plantations comprised the mainland towns of Providence, Warwick, East Greenwich, Kingstown, and Westerly (see map, page 20).

Providence, at that time, had about 1200 inhabitants. Although seafaring activities had effected a commercial growth in the southern part of the town the industrial center continued, for the time, in the north end. In 1704 William Edmunds opened a blacksmith shop, and William Smith a weaver's shop,²⁹ both located near the Olney Tavern (page 16). In 1706 land was granted to Richard Arnold and John Smith on the east side of Moshassuck river, below the grist mill, for setting up a saw mill.³⁰

Most of the inhabitants lived in dwellings on the east side of the Towne street. The wharves and warehouses of the sea merchants were conveniently located opposite their houses on the water front. The farmers, on the other hand, were obliged to cross the river to reach their meadows and grazing lands on Weybosset side; some already had erected dwellings on their farms. A bridge had been erected in 1660, where Market Square is now, but had not long survived (page 11). The only public land designated between the Towne street and the water front was a highway, stated in 1681 (page 15), which practically coincided with the portion of the present Market Square between the School of Design Auditorium and the Market House. The farmers crossed the river in boats and canoes and sometimes made use of the ford (page 11) through which they rode on horseback or drove their carts. In the summer of 1704 the Town Council took steps to remedy those primitive conditions in two ways; first, by designating a portion of the waterfront as common land and, second, by initiating a movement for a new bridge across the river.

The problem of the water rights arose as a result of the increasing number of requests for warehouse lots. The purchasers and the proprietors met together in July, 1704, and considered "how greatly detrementall it will proove & be unto the Towne if so there should be a grant of waare house lotts all along the Salt Water by the Towne Streete, by reason that People thereby would be so much obstructed of Recourse to and from the Waterside as they have Continuall ocation for; . . . because there is so Constant a Passing to & from

25. The church was "in the shape of a haycap, with a fireplace in the middle, the smoke escaping from a hole in the roof." — Kimball, p. 132.

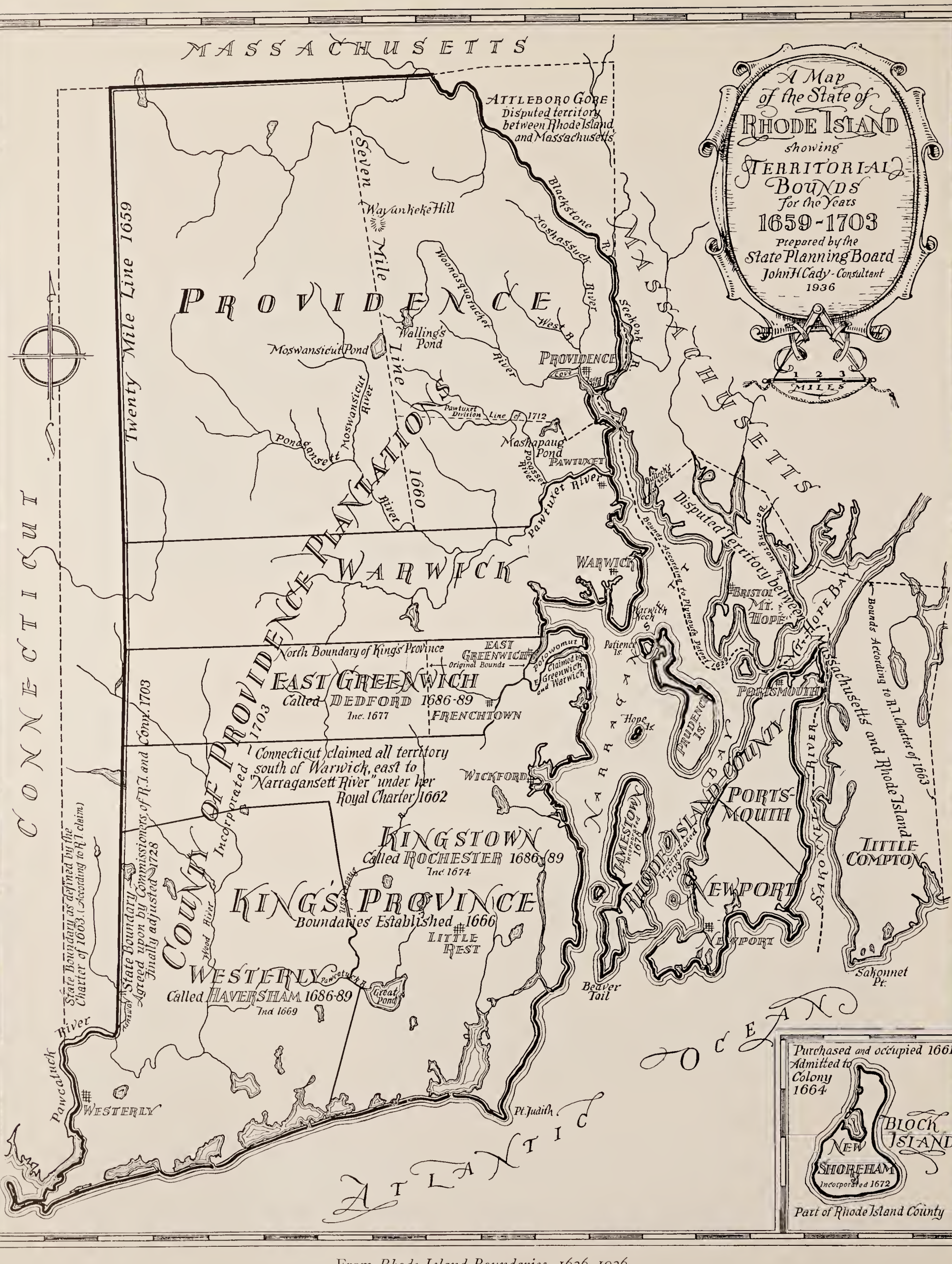
26. *E.R.P.*, XVIII, 2.

27. *R.I.C.R.*, III, 426.

28. *Ibid*, 477-479.

29. *E.R.P.*, XI, 79-80.

30. *Ibid*, 102.



A Map
of the State of
RHODE ISLAND
showing
**TERRITORIAL
BOUNDS**
for the Years
1659-1703
Prepared by the
State Planning Board
John H. Cady - Consultant
1936

Purchased and occupied 1661
Admitted to
Colony
1664

**BLOCK
ISLAND**

**NEW
SHOREHAM**
Incorporated 1672

Part of Rhode Island County

the Towne side to Wayboysett side Cross the Water & from Wayboysett side to the Towne with Cannooes & Boates, Rideing & Carting & Swimming over of Cattell from side to side; & the Streame often times Running so swift, & many times Rough Water by Reason of stormy Winds, whereby neither Cannooes Boates nor Cattell swimming can make any Certaine place to land, but must land where they can git on shore, which if the land by the shore were appropreated it would hinder any landing & so damage accrew."³¹ Accordingly, it was ordered that all of the land between the Towne street and the salt water from Thomas Field's home lot (near Crawford Street) northward to Thomas Olney's home lot (near the railroad viaduct), as well as the shore above Weybosset Neck, should "be & Continually Remaine in Comon." The area defined was bordered, roughly, by the present Crawford, South Main, North Main, and Steeple streets, Memorial Square, Exchange Place, Dorrance and Dyer streets, and Crawford Bridge. While it is a matter of record that the major part of the area so designated has not "continually remained in common" the town's order undoubtedly prevailed so long as the river was forded by carts and swum by cattle and, therefore, fulfilled its purpose.

The Town Council appointed Gideon Crawford and Joseph Whipple a committee "to Enquire of the inhabitants of Providence, & also of other Persons Elsewhere in the Country to see what they will Contribute to the building of a Bridge, from the Towne side of the salt water . . . begining against ye west End of the lott whereon Daniell Abbott his dwelling house standeth [page 11], & so cross the water unto the hill called Wayboset"³² which covered the area between the present Turks Head Building and the Arcade. Several years were required to finance the project but, by 1711, a sufficient sum of money had been raised to warrant its undertaking. The General Assembly sanctioned the project in that year and granted £200 out of the general treasury toward the construction of the bridge at Weybosset and of two others spanning Pawtucket [Blackstone] and Pawtuxet rivers, respectively.³³

Weybosset Bridge and its approaches (see map, page 144), which were backed up with earth, extended from the north side of the present Market House to Turks Head. It was about 14 feet wide, having one section constructed in such a way that it could be moved to permit the passage of boats into the cove. The bridge was carried away by a freshet and was rebuilt, about 1719, at the expense of the town.³⁴

With the completion of the three bridges traffic was greatly facilitated on the main road which ran through the colony, mostly following old Indian trails (page 11), from Pawtucket river to Pawcatuck river, over which was the principal part of the travel between Massachusetts and New York.³⁵ This road followed the lines of the present Main Street in Pawtucket; North Main Street, Market Square, Weybosset Street, and Broad Street in Providence; Broad Street in Cranston; and the Post Road in Warwick, East Greenwich, North Kingstown, South Kingstown, Charlestown, and Westerly.

In 1712 the town granted to Nathaniel Brown of Rehoboth, a newcomer to Providence, "halfe one acre of land lieing on Waybosset Neck betweene Mr. Waterman his Marsh & the salt water; the which he might have the use of for building vessels thereon."³⁶ The site was near the present corner of Pine and Orange streets. The advent of shipbuilding was a significant step in the early maritime history of the town.

The American Colonial style of architecture of the 18th century, like the contemporary English Georgian style, descended from the motives used in ancient Rome as codified by Marcus Vitruvius in the first century B. C. After ages of disuse those classic forms were

31. *E.R.P.*, XI, 88.

34. Staples, p. 198.

32. *Ibid*, 91.

35. *Ibid*, p. 187.

33. *R.I.C.R.*, IV, 118.

36. *E.R.P.*, XI, 158.

THE NECK



R.I.H.S.

Jones-Crawford house (c. 1715 – c. 1898), Mill Street.



R.I.H.S.

Philip Tillinghast house (c. 1710 – c. 1910), South Main Street.

revived by Andrea Palladio and other architects of the Italian Renaissance and introduced in England by Inigo Jones in the early 17th century. They provided a basis for Sir Christopher Wren's designs after the great fire of London in 1666.

Early 18th century architects and builders in New England acquired their knowledge of classic forms from books of plans, mostly of English origin, containing drawings of the five orders of architecture and other details and giving general rules for proportions. Those motives were used in the design of all types of buildings, large and small. The typical house plan was an evolution of the central-chimney type (page 9) with the rear leantos eventually incorporated in the main block, providing a rectangular unit with three fireplaces set in the chimney (see plan A, page 46).

The change from Tudor Gothic to Colonial architecture in Rhode Island occurred during the first two decades of the century. While end-chimney houses were not uncommon in the early years of the transition period, they usually had two full stories and the chimneys were built of brick, the manufacture of which had been commenced in the colony about 1690. An example was the house built by Nathaniel Jones on Mill Street about 1715 (illustration, page 22), purchased by Capt. John Crawford, which stood until 1898 — the last house of record in which a summer beam was used in Providence.³⁷ There are two brick-end survivors in the Providence metropolitan area, namely, the Smith-Cushing house (c. 1705) on Smithfield Road, North Providence, and the James Greene house (c. 1715) at Buttonwoods.³⁸ In contrast to these end-chimney examples was the center-chimney hipped roof house erected by Philip Tillinghast (c. 1710) which stood for about 200 years on South Main Street (illustration, page 22). The orderly arrangement of windows and doors and the use of classic mouldings and other details at the entrance are Colonial characteristics.

As farms became established at spots somewhat remote from the compact part of the town it became necessary to lay out more roads over which farm products could be transported to market (see map, page 27). The road to Plainfield was built in 1714, starting at Weybosset Bridge, following the old Pawtuxet road (page 21), now Weybosset Street, as far as its intersection with Broad Street, and continuing over the course of Weybosset, Westminster and Plainfield streets through western Rhode Island into Connecticut.³⁹ A branch of that road "towards Mashantatack" was ordered in 1717,⁴⁰ this being the origin of Cranston Street. A 17th century road running westerly from Moshassuck river bridge, near the town mill (pages 8, 12), was extended in the early 18th century into two branches, each identified as a "road through the stated common;" the south branch followed the course of Chalkstone Avenue to Mount Pleasant Avenue, and the north branch followed Douglas Avenue and Eaton Street to River Avenue.⁴¹ The Wanskuck road (page 15), branching westerly from the Pawtucket road, was extended over Branch and Douglas avenues to Wionkhiege Hill some time after 1706.⁴²

The taverns, most of which were located in the north end of the town, had increased in number to thirteen in 1717. The tavern keepers, licensed that year, included William Harris, William Turpin, James Olney, Benjamin Potter, John House, Samuel Irons, William

37. Isham, p. 52.

39. *E.R.P.*, XI, 140, 145; *P.S.H.*, I, 12.

38. *Ibid*, p. 53.

40. *E.R.P.*, IX, 22.

41. The stated common was a large tract of land, north of Woonasquatucket river, ordered in town meeting, 1658, "perpetually to lye & be in Comon" (*E.R.P.*, VIII, 157). That order did not hinder the town from disposing of the land to private interests as opportunities arose. The dates of the roads through the common are uncertain; the south branch was built before 1729 and the north branch before 1733 (*E.R.P.*, IX, 53, 66).

42. *E.R.P.*, V, 140; XI, 76, 110. The road was first proposed in 1701 and was still being agitated in 1706; it was probably laid out soon after that year.

THE NECK

Edmunds, James Arnold, Othniel Gorton, John Potter, John Sayles, John Guile, and Thomas Parker.⁴³ Near the Olney tavern (page 16) a town pound was put up in 1717.⁴⁴

Supplementing the original distribution of home lots (page 7) a second division of lots was platted, in 1717-18, and allotted, individually, to the proprietors or their assigns. The lots were in two groups, one on the Neck and the other on Weybosset side. The areas platted on the Neck (see map, page 56) included a row of 12 lots, on the south side of the present Olney Street, north of and adjacent to the northernmost home lot of the 1638 division and 38 lots within the area now bounded by North Main, Charles, Bark, and Hewes streets.⁴⁵ "A street twenty foot wide over Stampers Hill" was recorded on the plat, later known as Stampers Street (page 7). It ran midway between the present North Main and Bark streets and became a part of Carleton Davis Boulevard⁴⁶ in 1931 (page 238). On Weybosset side 84 lots were platted, with gangways at intervals, on the south side of "A Highway Fourty Feet Wide" (originally the Pequot path, now Weybosset Street), and six lots were platted on the north side of a highway leading to Cowpen Point (illustration page 80), all extending to the shore.⁴⁷

43. *E.R.P.*, XII, 58.

44. *Ibid*, XIII, 9.

45. *P.S.H.*, I, 12; see also footnote 33, page 6.

46. Capt. J. Carleton Davis of Providence, in whose memory the boulevard was named, was an officer in the 26th Division, A.E.F., in World War I.

47. *P.B.*, IV, 34, "A Map of the House Lots, 1717-18." The fronts of the lots, on the 40-foot highway, extended along the present Westminster and Weybosset streets from Dyer to Dorrance. Cowpen Point, documented as early as 1710 (*E.R.P.*, XI, 146), was located near the foot of Ship Street.



From Downing, *Early Homes of Rhode Island*

John Tripp house, c. 1725, 953½ Manton Avenue

CHAPTER 3 1720 - 1760

THERE developed in the 1720's a considerable activity in church building. For some time a movement had been under way to establish the Church of England in Providence, and this was advanced when Nathaniel Brown (page 21), who had



R.I.H.S.

King's Church, 1722-1810, North Main Street, from an engraving made from a drawing by Zechariah Allen, owned by R. I. Historical Society.

erected his home in 1712 on the Towne street (North Main, near Howland), donated the adjoining lot for a church. Through his energy and that of Gabriel Bernon and Colonel Joseph Whipple in securing donations, King's Church was erected in 1722 on the site where

THE NECK

the Cathedral of Saint John stands. It was a very simple frame edifice (illustration, page 25), "sixty-two feet long by forty-one broad, and twenty-six feet high,"¹ with a low pitch roof and high curved-top windows. A steeple, containing the first town bell, was built over the front vestibule about 1771 with funds raised from a lottery. The church stood until 1810 when it was demolished to make way for the present building (page 75). A glebe was erected in the upper part of the Neck (near the present Brown stadium) in 1729 for Reverend Arthur Browne, the rector.

A Congregational society, formed in 1720, purchased a lot on Weybosset Side, within the junction of the Pawtuxet and Plainfield roads (Broad and Weybosset streets) in 1722 and commenced the erection of a meeting house. The site proved too remote to suit most of the society's members however, and the timbers were taken down and removed to a lot "up Rosemary Lane," (southwest corner of College and Benefit), purchased from Daniel Abbott, where the meeting house was erected in 1723.² It was a wood structure with an entrance tower and steeple on the east front. The building underwent alterations from time to time, including the removal of the steeple,³ and was sold to the town in 1793 (page 67, illustration, page 68). The Congregational society was divided in 1743 upon the withdrawal of a group who erected the New Light Meeting House on Weybosset side (page 35). The remainder continued to worship on the Neck under the name of the First Congregational Society. The lot originally purchased was used as a burying ground from 1722 until it was vacated by order of the General Assembly in 1785; in that year the two societies, which had maintained it jointly, established individual cemeteries in the West Burial Ground (page 60).

In 1725 a Quaker Meeting House was built on the east side of the Towne street, north of the present Meeting Street. Here town meetings were held and a school was maintained.⁴ An addition was made in 1725, and the building continued in use until replaced by a larger structure in 1844 (page 111).

A new Baptist church was erected in 1726 at the northwest corner of the present North Main and Smith streets, opposite the original building of that denomination built in 1700 (page 16). At high water the tide flowed nearly up to the west end of the building. From the entrance on the Towne street an aisle, flanked by benches, extended to a raised pulpit at the rear. There was a gallery reached by a stairway from a south entrance. The church was maintained until completion of the present First Baptist Meeting House in 1775 (page 50), after which it was used, successively as a sugar refinery, a rag depository for Thurber's Paper Mill (page 61), and a store house.⁵

The compact part of the town at this period was still confined to a section of the Neck. There were a few houses on the road (Weybosset Street) leading from the town bridge to Plainfield and on scattered farms to the west. The only public improvements on Weybosset side were the town highways. The principal obstacle to the development of the lands at Weybosset Point was a hill which rose westward from the present Turk's Head. Its leveling was desired but the town could not afford the project. It was then discovered

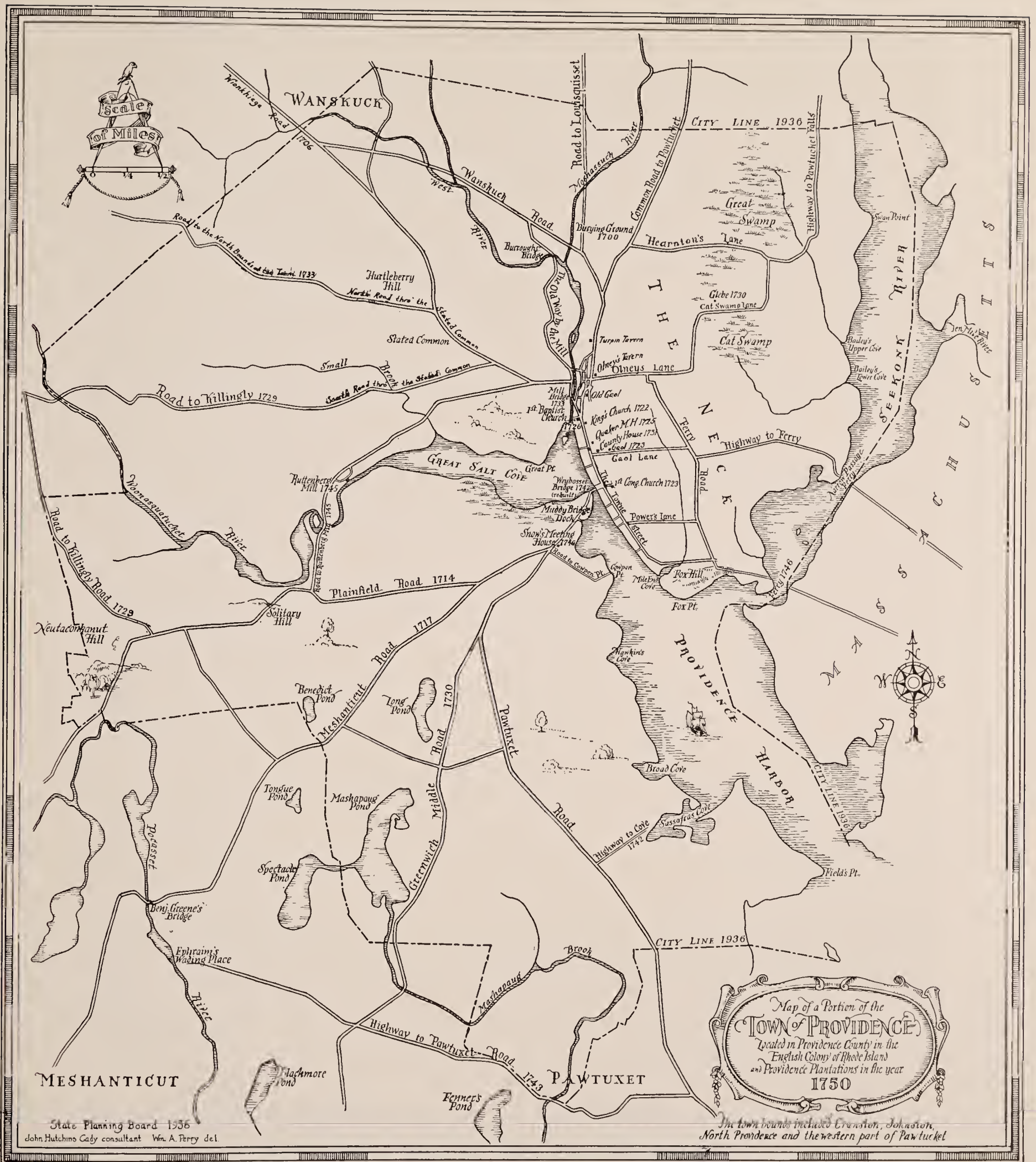
1. Staples, p. 144.

2. From the records of the First Congregational Society.

3. *R.I.C.R.*, VII, 206. The society, in seeking the grant of a lottery for repairs to the building in 1773, reported that "the steeple . . . is in so ruinous a condition that it must be immediately taken down." It was proposed to erect a clock tower on the rear of the meeting house, but there is no evidence that the project was consummated.

4. Staples, p. 430.

5. Stone, p. 29; *R.I.Hist.*, X, 46.



THE NECK

that there was clay in the hill and, pursuant to a request by Thomas Staples, the town readily granted him permission in 1724 to dig the clay to make bricks.⁶ The advantages to the town by that act were two-fold: a brick-kiln was established in Providence and Weybosset Hill eventually was leveled, permitting the later construction of Westminster Street (page 35).

After the establishment of the road to Plainfield in 1714 (page 23) intercourse with Connecticut increased to such an extent that another road to that colony was required. Accordingly, by order of the Town Council in 1729 the road to Killingly was laid out through the stated common (page 23), following Chalkstone, Manton, Greenville and Putnam avenues into Connecticut. A branch from that road, starting a short distance west of Woonasquatucket river, was built over the present Killingly Street southerly to join the Plainfield Road (page 23) east of Neutaconkanut Hill. The northerly road through the stated common was extended over Eaton and Smith streets to Centredale in 1733.⁷

In 1730 a road defined as the Masipauge Way was laid out from Mashapaug pond southerly to Pettaconsett, extending an earlier highway which branched from the Pawtuxet road. The whole extent, later known as Greenwich Middle Road, is now identified as Elmwood, Reservoir and Pontiac avenues from Trinity Square in Providence to Sockanosset Avenue in Cranston.⁸

By act of the General Assembly in 1729 the county of Providence Plantations was subdivided with Providence, Warwick and East Greenwich constituting Providence County and North Kingstown, South Kingstown and Westerly forming a new King's County (see map, page 34). At the same time the name Rhode Island County was changed to Newport County.⁹

The General Assembly then took steps for the erection of a county house in Providence and purchased, for a site, the lot on the north side of the present Meeting Street, between North Main and Benefit, on which the Brick Schoolhouse (page 43) now stands. The funds appropriated for the building were augmented by a sum of money paid out of the Providence town treasury "so that said house might be made so Large as to be Servable for the Townes Publick use." The County House, as completed in 1731, was "fourty foot Long and thirty foot wide and eightene foot Stud betwixt Joynts." It was used by the colony for the sessions of the General Assembly and the courts, and by the town for town meetings, but when not needed by either colony or town it was utilized for other purposes.¹⁰

In 1735 the General Assembly granted permission to George Taylor to keep school in one of the chambers of the County House, provided "he keeps the glass of said house in constant good repair . . . and erect a handsome sun-dial in the front of said house, both for ornament and use, and build a necessary house convenient, to prevent nuisance, and to serve the public."¹¹

The County House later was headquarters of the first public library in Providence, established under the name of the Providence Library Company. A collection of several hundred volumes was purchased in England and, by authority of the General Assembly in 1754, shelves were erected in the council chamber for their accommodation.¹² The build-

6. *E.R.P.*, IX, 41.

8. *Ibid*, IX, 55-57. See map, p. 27.

9. *R.I.C.R.*, IV, 427.

10. Howard W. Preston, "The Old County House in Providence," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XI, 37-44.

11. *R.I.C.R.*, IV, 511.

12. *R.I.C.R.*, V, 379. The Providence Library Company was united with the Providence Athenæum in 1836. See page 107.

7. *Ibid*, IX, 49, 53, 65. See maps, pp. 14, 27.

10. *Ibid*, 430.

ing, together with the library, was destroyed by fire December 24, 1758 (page 36).

In 1731 a committee was appointed by the town "to bound out the highway that leads up into the Neck by the County house . . . from the Towne street to the highway at the head of the Town Lotts."¹³ It was named County House Way. Two years later the County Jail was built on that highway, near the present northeast corner of Meeting and Benefit streets. It was the third jail erected in the town; the first (page 16), built in 1699, was destroyed by fire six years later and the second, erected in 1705, was abandoned when the County Jail was opened. Following the erection of the building the name County House Way was changed to Gaol Lane. It became Meeting Street in 1772 (page 47).

The town bounds, since 1659, had included all of the present lands of Rhode Island north of the Warwick and Coventry lines and west of Providence, Seekonk and Blackstone rivers. As the outlying areas were becoming considerably populated the inhabitants of those lands experienced difficulty "in transacting and negotiating the prudential affairs of the town." Accordingly, an act was passed by the General Assembly in 1731 "for erecting and incorporating the out-lands of the town of Providence into three towns"¹⁴ named Scituate, Glocester and Smithfield; this reduced the area of Providence to about one-quarter of its former size (see map, page 34).

Among the prosperous merchants dwelling on the Towne street in this period was Colonel Nicholas Power, 3d, who married Mercy Tillinghast, uniting the families of two of the early settlers. Power erected a large dwelling on the northeast corner of Power's Lane (the site of the Providence Boys' Club), opposite which, on the water front, stood his warehouse. He owned also a cooper's shop, a cider mill, three stills, a cheese press, a sloop, and four negro slaves.¹⁵ His daughter Hope married Captain James Brown, descendant of Chad Brown, an original proprietor. The captain's house was on the east side of the Towne street (where the Court House stands) and across the way, on the waterfront, were the shop and distillery which he had established following a prosperous voyage to the West Indies in 1722. He and his younger brother Obadiah entered partnership as merchants, about 1733, and the business was continued by Obadiah after James's death in 1739. James and Hope Brown were parents of Nicholas, Joseph, John, and Moses Brown, who figured conspicuously in the town's affairs in the next generation (page 37).

Considerable highway activity developed in the Neck in the year 1738. One project was "the Preambulation and Revisal of the bounds of the highway [Power Street] Lieing from Providence Towne street [South Main] Eastwardly into a highway that Goes a Crass at the East End of the Town Lotts [Hope Street]."¹⁶ The width of Power's Lane, as the highway was known, was "two pole" or about 33 feet. It was bordered on the south by the land of Nicholas Power, 3d, and on the north by Colonel Joseph Whipple's property, except at the Towne street end where the Power homestead stood.

In the same year the Town Council appointed "subscribers to Revise the bounds of several highways and to Lay out sundry other highways from the Towne street down to the salt water River,"¹⁷ as follows: the revisal of a highway 51 feet wide (James Street) north of Charles Tillinghast's house; the layout of a highway 41 feet wide (Planet Street) adjoining the northerly side of Nicholas Power's garden;¹⁸ the revisal of a highway 36 feet wide (Crawford Street) between Joseph Crawford's warehouse on the south and James

13. *E.R.P.*, IX, 59. This was one of the lanes in the original highway pattern of the town. See page 7.

14. *R.I.C.R.*, IV, 442-445.

15. Kimball, p. 242.

16. *E.R.P.*, IX, 76.

17. *Ibid*, 77-79.

18. Power had two gardens located, respectively, south and west of his homestead.

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Mitchell's dwelling on the north; the revisal and widening of a highway¹⁹ "from the Town streete westward: Down to the salt water River: Where the Greate Bridge now standeth that Goeth over the River to Waybaset," 123 feet wide, between Colonel Abbott's still house (page 33) on the south and his land on the north. This was known subsequently as the Town Parade; it was the origin of Market Square, its breadth extending from the present School of Design Auditorium southward to include the lawn of the Market House. Also a highway 50 feet wide (Steeple Street) "Oppisate against the home stead Land of John Angel Esq'r It being the Place where they Usually Landed when Rod or Carted from the other side of the River," and running between Angell's warehouse on the south and his garden on the north; a highway (Haymarket Street) 37 feet wide bordering William Smith's house on the south and "the schoole house" on the north;²⁰ and a highway 66 feet wide (Smith Street) between the Baptist Meeting House on the north and William Antram's dwelling on the south.

Another project of 1738 was a highway (Mill Street) laid out from Colonel Joseph Whipple's cooper shop on the Towne street, passing the house of the heirs of John Crawford, deceased (page 23) and extending northerly, by a bridge, across Moshassuck river.²¹ And the final undertaking of the year was the widening of the old path (South Angell, East River and Waterman streets) leading to the ferry at Narrow Passage.²²

The wood dwellings erected in Providence after the colonial style had become established followed, as a rule, the center chimney plan (page 23). Like the earlier houses they were framed with heavy sills, posts and girts, dovetailed one into another, the horizontal timbers notched for joists and rafters. Vertical boards were nailed to the timbers and were faced with clapboards or shingles on the outside and with lath and plaster on the inside. The posts and beams were no longer left exposed in the rooms but were covered with beaded casings. Roof designs were of three general types — gable, gambrel and hipped.²³

On some of the earlier gable-roof houses the cornice extended around all four sides and the walls of the gable ends were projected outward. The Christopher Sheldon house (c. 1755), with its huge brick pilastered chimney, which stood at 357 South Main Street until about 1908, was of that roof type (illustration, page 31). But in most instances, as noted on the Stephen Hopkins house (illustration, page 31), the cornice was built only on the long walls, with a return of the crown mouldings around the corner boards, and the end walls carried up straight into the flat gables, their intersection with the roof covered with rake mouldings. Stephen Hopkins, later chief justice of the Supreme Court, governor of Rhode Island, a member of the Continental Congress and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, purchased, in 1743, a small house which stood at the present northeast corner of South Main and Hopkins streets, to which he built an addition. It was moved halfway up Hopkins Street in 1809, and again moved to its present location at 12 Hopkins Street in 1928 where it was restored by Norman M. Isham (page 239). The rear wing is the original house and the front part, containing an entrance hall flanked by rooms of unequal

19. A highway "three poles wide" previously had been ordered in 1681. See page 15.

20. The origin of the schoolhouse is obscure. A committee was appointed, in 1752, "to have the care of the town school house, and to appoint a master to teach in said house." Two years later it was leased by the town to Stephen Jackson, schoolmaster. (Staples, p. 495.)

21. *E.R.P.*, IX, 81; *P.S.H.*, I, 9.

22. *E.R.P.*, IX, 85. See page 13.

23. The gable roof, having sloping sides and gable ends, originated in the Greek temple; the gambrel roof, a modification of the gable roof with two pitches on each side, was of mediaeval origin; the hipped roof, with sloping sides and ends, was an innovation of the Renaissance.

1720 - 1760



R.I.H.S.

Christopher Sheldon house, c. 1735 - c. 1908, 357 South Main Street



R.I.H.S.

Stephen Hopkins house, c. 1743, 12 Hopkins Street

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R.I.H.S.

Abbott Still House, c. 1730 – c. 1867, corner of South Main and College streets.



R.I.H.S.

Richard Brown house, c. 1731, Butler Health Center grounds.

width, was the addition made by Mr. Hopkins. The house is owned by the state and is in the custody of the Society of Colonial Dames in Rhode Island.

One of the best known gambrel-roof houses of the period, a familiar landmark in the Market Square area until its demolition to provide an extension of College Street in 1867 (page 143), was Daniel Abbott's distill house (page 30; illustration, page 32). Originally a dwelling, erected c. 1730, it was later acquired by Judge Daniel Jenckes who converted it into shops and probably added the long monitor-type roof dormer. A smaller gambrel-roof example is the John Tripp house (c. 1725), still standing at 953½ Manton Avenue (illustration, page 24), in the end wall of which is exposed a square section of stone chimney with a beehive oven.

The first brick house in the town was a gambrel-roof dwelling built about 1731 by Justice Richard Brown on his farm in the north part of the Neck, still standing on the grounds of Butler Hospital (illustration, page 32). The original floor plan, before enlargement to the east, was similar to that of the late 17th century dwellings (page 16), except that diagonal fireplaces were built into the end chimney at the corners of the rooms. A similar fireplace arrangement was followed in the house built by Deputy Governor Elisha Brown in 1759; most of it survives at 597 North Main Street, but its symmetry has been lost through the removal of its north end.

Prior to 1739 the only means of crossing Seekonk river were by the bridge at Pawtucket and the ferry at Narrow Passage where Red Bridge is now located (page 13). Pursuant to a petition filed that year by Josiah Fuller and Elisha Tillinghast the General Assembly authorized the establishment of a lower ferry at India Point.²⁴ It was reached from the Neck by a southerly and easterly extension of the highway at the head of the lots (Hope Street) and connected with a road to Bristol on the opposite shore (see map, page 27). It was the practice of the General Assembly to lease the ferries in the colony "to those who are best provided with a boat wharf and pier" and to require bonds as a condition of the lease.²⁵

The territorial bounds of the colony of Rhode Island were extended eastward in 1746 when certain lands which previously had been under dispute (page 12) were taken from the Massachusetts colony by direction of the Royal Commissioners. These were incorporated into five towns by the General Assembly in 1746-7, namely, Cumberland, attached to Providence County; Tiverton and Little Compton, added to Newport County; and Bristol and Warren, incorporated as the colony's fourth county, named Bristol.²⁶ In 1850 Warwick and East Greenwich, together with Coventry and West Greenwich which had been set off from those towns in 1741, were divided from Providence County and incorporated as Kent County.²⁷

The General Assembly in November, 1744, passed an act allowing a lottery of £15,000 for building a new Weybosset Bridge, thereby nullifying a previous act of 1733 suppressing lotteries.²⁸ This was the commencement of the lottery system by which numerous public projects were financed during ensuing years. The new bridge, which replaced the former structure, was 18 feet wide with abutments carried out 30 feet on the east end and four feet on the west end. A stone pier supported the bridge in the center. The construction required two years, pending which time a ferry was kept in operation.²⁹ The bridge was used principally by the farmers who brought their produce from the agricultural lands on Weybosset side. Following its erection a hayward (hay scale) was set up near its easterly abutment

24. Staples, p. 196. See map, page 27.

27. *Ibid*, 301-302. See map, page 34.

25. *R.I.C.R.*, IV, 376.

28. *Ibid*, IV, 478; V. 100.

26. *Ibid*, V, 204-209.

29. Staples, p. 198.

MASSACHUSETTS



and the area became known as the Market Place until identified as the Parade in 1772 (page 47).

Through the activities of Deacon Joseph Snow and his son Joseph Snow, Jr., who with others had seceded from the First Congregational Church (page 26), the New Light Meeting House was built in 1746 on the road to Pawtuxet, near its junction with the Plainfield Road (Broad and Weybosset streets). Daniel Abbott, who gave the land for the meeting house, deeded to the town in the same year an adjacent tract of land for "the use of the Publick . . . for passing and repassing training and the like all ways to be kept free and clear of any building fencing or any other incumbrance to the prejudice of the publick forever."³⁰ This was the town's first village green, now known as Abbott Park. The younger Snow was pastor of the church until 1793 when he organized the Richmond Street Congregational Church (page 75). The New Light Meeting House was replaced by the Beneficent Congregational Church in 1809 (page 74). The Snows were instrumental in developing a large residential area in the vicinity of the meeting house.³¹

The Concord distil-house was built in 1752 on the water front (near the present corner of Pine and Dorrance streets) where a wide ditch extended to "Muddy Dock" (Weybosset and Dorrance), over which barrels were transported on scows from the distillery.³² In the same year a highway bridge was built at Muddy Dock where the crossing previously had been made by a ford. Westminster Street had its origin in 1753 when a "streight street 40 feet wide"³³ was ordered from Whitman's house (Turks Head) to Mathewson's land (Dorrance Street) across Waterman's marsh with a gangway (Orange Street) connecting it with "the old street" (Weybosset).

The most densely populated part of the town, in the middle of the century, was the north end. Two new streets were laid out there in 1752,³⁴ now identified, respectively, as Charles and West River. A county alms-house and workhouse was established at the present corner of Charles and Smith streets by act of the General Assembly in 1753³⁵ and a new county jail was built in the same year, west of the schoolhouse lot (page 30) at the present corner of Canal and Haymarket streets.³⁶

The first major highway improvement affecting the original proprietors' lots in the Neck was the construction of Benefit Street. This was first proposed in 1743 by members of the Congregational Society, residing in the north end of the town, who wished to have a back street parallel with the Towne street to provide them with easier access to the meeting house. The town merchants, realizing that the Towne street was inadequate for the increasing population, favored the proposal for the new street. The lot owners, however, objected to the construction of a highway athwart their properties and succeeded, for a time, in blocking the project. It was revived in 1746 with the filing of a petition signed by Robert Gibbs, Daniel Jenckes, Stephen Hopkins, and about 40 other citizens. In substance, this petition recalled that the compact part of the town had recently expanded, with a corresponding increase in the business transacted; that the Towne street was not sufficient for business purposes; that the home lots adjoining the street had been mostly built upon or were in the hands of proprietors who did not care to sell; and that there were no lots available for gentlemen, tradesmen and others whose inclinations would be to settle in Providence; and praying that another highway be laid out northward from Power's Lane a convenient distance eastward of the present street.³⁷ The following year the council

30. Arthur E. Wilson, *Weybosset Bridge* (Boston, 1947), p. 256.

32. Kimball, p. 202.

35. A.&R., 1753, p. 78.

33. P.S.H., I, 21.

36. R.I.C.R., V, 371, 373, 402.

31. *Ibid*, p. 170-184.

34. *Ibid*, 7.

37. Dorr, p. 148.

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appointed a committee to investigate the feasibility of constructing the new highway, and a plat of the proposed back street was made by Stephen Hopkins, surveyor, extending from the south end of the town northerly to intersect the present North Main Street at the head of Constitution Hill.³⁸

Some years elapsed before the construction of the Back street commenced, owing to the continued opposition on the part of owners of the home lots who resented the removal of the family burial lots which had been located on the hillside for many years. Eventually the opposition yielded, the lines of the street were established in accordance with a new plat drawn in 1756, compensation was voted for damages to lot owners, and work on the highway, later identified as Benefit Street, was undertaken. The southern end was built first and by the summer of 1758 the whole length was completed (see map, page 70). The only burial lot which now survives is the one where Pardon Tillinghast and about 30 of his descendants are buried, near the corner of Benefit and Transit streets.

The area of Providence, which had been reduced in 1731 by the setting off of three towns (page 29), was further contracted by the removal of the southern and western areas which were incorporated, respectively, as Cranston in 1754 and Johnston in 1759.³⁹ The revised bounds of Providence began at the head of Hawkins cove, where Rhode Island Hospital is located, ran westerly to the head of Benedict pond (near the junction of the present Terrace and Hillwood streets), then northerly to Woonasquatucket river (near Olneyville Square) and followed the lines of that river to Smithfield (see map, page 69).

The inhabitants of the compact part of the town, in 1754, represented to the General Assembly that there was "a great necessity to have a water engine of a large size, purchased, to extinguish fires, that may casually break out in said town; and that the best way to obtain one, will be by laying a tax on the houses, goods and other things, to be destroyed by fire."⁴⁰ The necessary authority was granted, the tax levied, and the engine, purchased in London, was delivered in 1756 and quartered on the gangway north of the Baptist Meeting House (Smith Street).

In 1758 the County House (page 28) was destroyed by fire. The water engine proved to be of so little value that a new tax was levied and a larger engine was ordered from London which arrived in 1760 and was housed on the Town Parade. The General Assembly, in 1759, authorized the town of Providence to appoint fire wards, made certain rules and regulations governing the fighting of fires, including the ringing of church bells and the repairing of every able-bodied man to the fire with a bucket, and defined the limits of the compact part of the town in which the rules should apply.⁴¹

A colonial postal service was instituted in Providence in 1758, in which year Samuel Chase was appointed postmaster. The post office was first located in a two-story building, opposite King's Church, as an appendage to a bookseller's shop.⁴²

38. P.S.H., I, 17.

39. R.I.C.R., V, 388-390; VI, 194. Cranston was named for Samuel Cranston, governor of the colony, 1698-1727; and Johnston for Augustus Johnston, attorney general, 1758-66.

40. *Ibid*, V, 401.

41. A.&R., 1759, p. 79. The limits were as follows: "The House of Jabez Whipple, and that of Peter Randal, standing opposite to it [on Branch Avenue, opposite North Burial Ground], and, from thence Southward, all the Buildings that are or shall be erected, butting on, or near adjacent to the Streets, both old and new, to the utmost Extent, together with all the Mills and Houses in that part of the said Town, which is called Charlestown as far westward as the Town-Pound [west of Moshassuck river between Smith and Orms streets], and all such Part of the said Town as is called the Point [Weybosset], as far Westward as the Burying-Place [Weybosset and Broad streets]."

42. Dorr, p. 199.

CHAPTER 4 1760 - 1772

BY the year 1760 commerce had become the most important factor in the development of the Rhode Island colony. Newport was still the leading port in Narragansett bay as well as one of the busiest on the American continent while Providence, with a population only half that of Newport, was on her way toward commercial exploits which were to bring her fame in later years of the century.

The principal sea activities were privateering and commerce with the West Indies and Africa. During the French and Indian War of 1756-63 the Rhode Island colony issued over 60 letters of marque to capture the vessels and merchandise of the enemies of the King of England. The vessels captured under those commissions were taken to the nearest British Admiralty Court and, if their seizures were declared legal, were condemned and sold with their cargoes and the proceeds divided, in each case, between the owners, officers and crew.¹ In trade with the West Indies the vessels cleared from Rhode Island with cargoes of farm and dairy products, dried fish, beef, pork, horses and lumber, and returned laden with molasses, rum, sugar, and cotton. The only custom house in the colony was in Newport and smuggling was frequent. Many distilleries were in operation in Providence where molasses was converted into rum and shipped in vessels to Africa whence slaves were brought back to the West Indies on the return voyages.

Among the leading Providence merchants were the members of the Brown family. Obadiah Brown had continued the sea trade established by his brother James after the latter's death in 1739 (page 29), and prospered both as shopkeeper and ship owner. He also engaged in the manufacture of spermaceti candles. In the late 1750s he organized the house of Obadiah Brown and Company, taking his nephews, Nicholas, Joseph, John and Moses, into the firm. After Obadiah's death in 1762 the nephews carried on the various enterprises of the firm under the name of Nicholas Brown and Company, and expanded the scope of activities with the construction and operation of Hope Furnace, near Pawtuxet river in Scituate, in 1765, for the manufacture of pig iron.²

Passenger service between Providence and Newport was instituted about 1764 by regular sailings of a packet from Hacker's Wharf, located near the foot of the present Planet Street. Joshua Hacker, its proprietor, formerly of Salem, built a house on the east side of the Towne street, opposite his wharf, which he later converted into a place of entertainment known as Hacker's Hall. Balls and parties were held there by the elite of the town, invitations to which were printed on playing cards. Among the distinguished guests entertained at the hall were Washington, Varnum, Gates and Rochambeau.³

The erection of a new Colony House, to replace the County House that had been destroyed by fire (page 36), was undertaken in 1760. A lot was acquired "northward of that whereon the meeting house of the people called Quakers, stands,"⁴ extending from the

1. Howard W. Preston, *Rhode Island's Historic Background*, published by Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission, 1936, p. 24.

2. James B. Hedges, *The Browns of Providence Plantations*, Cambridge, 1952, pp. 12-15, 124. An earlier furnace and foundry had been established at an ore bed in that vicinity by Daniel Waldo in 1735.

3. Edwin Martin Stone, *Our French Allies* (Providence, 1884), p. 253.

4. *R.I.C.R.*, VI, 207.

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Towne street to Benefit Street. A committee, consisting of Allen Brown, William Smith and David Harris, was appointed to procure materials for a brick building with the understanding that the timber required would be furnished by Obadiah Brown at cost.⁵ Construction work proceeded slowly and in June, 1762, the General Assembly appointed Daniel



R.I.H.S.

Colony House, 1762, as enlarged in 1851

Jenckes and William Wheaton a committee "to complete the outside . . . so far as to keep it from taking damage, lay the floors, build the stairs, and complete two rooms in the chamber, suitable for the General Assembly to sit in."⁶ The Colony House (also known as the Court House), as completed late in 1762, was about 40 by 70 feet in area, having two stories and a basement, with a hipped roof and balustraded deck surmounted by a tower. The basement walls were of coursed-stone and the walls above were brick with rusticated stone trimmings. A new collection of books was purchased and installed in replacement of the library which had been burned. The building was financed, partly by lotteries and

5. *R.I.C.R.*, VI, 196, 209.

6. *Ibid*, 327.

partly by grants from the general treasury.⁷ It was enlarged and altered, in 1850-51, by the addition of a front projecting entrance and tower with a wood belfry and a long flight of stone steps, designed by Thomas A. Tefft (illustration, page 38). The interior also was altered, except the northwest room in the second story which retains to this day its original character. An addition to the east end, facing Benefit Street, was constructed later from plans by Alfred Stone. Washington, Lafayette and Rochambeau were visitors at the building. Following the Declaration of Independence in 1776 it became the State House and so continued until 1900. It has since been headquarters for the Sixth District Court.

The condition of the town highways, at the time the Colony House was built, is described in the words of a petition made by several of the inhabitants to the General Assembly in February, 1761, which represented that the streets "are so bad that at some seasons of the year it is almost impracticable to pass; that this inconvenience is rendered still greater, by the great number of carts and other carriages coming into the said town; that the said streets, from the nature and situation of the ground, can never be made good and passable, unless they be paved; and therefore they prayed that a lottery or lotteries may be granted for raising such a sum of money as shall be sufficient for paving the said streets, or at least such parts thereof, as shall be judged more immediately necessary."⁸ The Assembly granted the petition and authorized a lottery for raising the sum of £6000 to be applied toward paving the streets of Providence under direction of Nicholas Cooke, John Brown, Knight Dexter, Joseph Bennett, Joseph Bucklin, and George Jackson. The paving program was in three parts, each starting from Weybosset Bridge and radiating, respectively, "up town" (north), "down town" (south), and "westward" and extending, in each case, "as far as the nett proceeds will carry it." An enlargement of the program was permitted by the authorization of a lottery for raising an additional £6000 in September, 1761.⁹ The paving technique consisted in the laying of large, round stones with a line of stones of still larger size in the middle, called the crown of the causeway.¹⁰

On the night of October 24, 1761, there was a hard gale of wind which brought the highest tide into the harbor of Providence that had been known in the memory of man, carried away Weybosset Bridge, and beat down part of its "buttments and pillars." Forthwith the town deputies presented a petition to the General Assembly, recalling that the bridge had been built "from time to time, at the expense of the colony, excepting the last time, when it was re-built by money raised by a lottery," and praying that the Assembly "grant a sum of money, sufficient to re-build the said bridge." The sum of £1000 was appropriated from the general treasury for the purpose, under protest of six subscribers who argued that "there being but thirty-five members now present, and fourteen of that number belonging to the county of Providence; we think they have a great advantage of voting money to their own county."¹¹ The bridge as rebuilt in 1764 was 22 feet wide and its total cost was £4357. Subsequently a lottery was granted for building a draw in the bridge (illustration, page 40). "After this, vessels from the West Indies, with full cargoes, went up as far as the foot of Bowen-Street. The tradition is, that the first square rigged vessel that ever sailed from the port, sailed from a wharf as high up as the canal market."¹²

7. *R.I.C.R.*, VI, 215, 236, 237, 252, 270, 327.

9. *Ibid*, 286-287.

8. *Ibid*, 269.

10. Dorr, p. 93.

11. *R.I.C.R.*, VI, 294.

12. Staples, p. 205. The north side of the bridge started from a point seven feet south of the present northwest corner of Westminster Street and Washington Row and extended easterly, practically in continuation of the line of Westminster Street (P.S.H., I, 22). The east abutments were approximately 30 feet west of the present North Main Street, from which point the Town Parade sloped down to the shore. See page 33.

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By direction of the Town Council in 1761 a revision was made of "that part of the street [Weybosset] between the Town Bridge and Muddy Bridge Dock [Dorrance Street] and of the gangways leading out of same," an area which had been platted originally by the proprietors in 1717 (page 24). The changes as recorded on a plat made in January, 1762, reflecting the development of that area over a period of 45 years, included a widening of the highway leading from the bridge to the present Turks Head, a "new back street" (Westminster), and a "highway 40 feet wide" (Exchange Street) extending northerly to the cove waters.¹³ Six houses are spotted on the plat, their owners identified as Jacob Whitman, Ezek Eddy, Dunnell, John Wilde, Kinnicut and George Jackson. The first of these is of historic significance. It was a large gambrel-roofed house erected about 1750 at the junction of the present Westminster and Weybosset streets, a spot known for many years thereafter as Whitman's Corner. There Jacob Whitman lived until his death in 1802 and cultivated



R.I.H.S.

The town of Providence in 1762 looking southwest towards Weybosset Bridge from Gaol Lane (Meeting Street). From a sketch in possession of the Hope Club, drawn by Henry A. Barker as a design for scenery in the production of "In Colony Times," a celebration play given as a part of the Brown Sesquicentennial, 1914.

one of the largest gardens in the state. In his later years he acquired a turk's head of heroic size and diabolical aspect, said to have been the figure-head of a wrecked ship named *Sultan*, which he set up in the balustrade over his piazza.¹⁴ The effigy was blown down in the great gale of 1815 (page 81) but the place name of Turks Head, superseding the former Whitman's Corner, has been perpetuated. The house was replaced by the three-story Whitman Block in 1828 (page 97) which stood until Turks Head Building (page 227) was erected in 1913.

In June of 1763 it was reported to the General Assembly that the "new street . . . running directly from the Great Bridge, up to the westward, wants a great deal of filling up and raising, to render it commodius."¹⁵ Accordingly, a lottery was granted "for rendering passable and commodious a streight and very fine street, for passing to the middle of the town from all western parts."¹⁶ The street was named after the city of Westminster in England, a center of liberal opinions and politics. The choice of that name reflected the political sympathies of the land owners on Weybosset side, who resented the "despotic

13. P.S.H., I, 22.

14. William M. Bailey, "Turks Head and the Whitman Estate," *R.I.H.S.C.*, V, 216.

15. *R.I.C.R.*, VI, 356.

16. *Providence Gazette*, Oct. 19, 1763.

rule" of Providence by the dwellers of the Neck and who even attempted to have a new town of Westminster set off which should be free from the influence of the Towne street.¹⁷

On October 20, 1762, William Goddard, who had succeeded Samuel Chase as postmaster (page 36), commenced publication of the town's first newspaper, the *Providence Gazette and Country Journal*, at a printing shop "opposite the court house" on the Towne street. This was the first of several addresses. The shop was moved in July, 1763, to the store of Judge Jenckes (Abbott Still House, page 33) "at the Sign of Shakespear's Head." On March 16, 1765, the *Gazette* announced that "on Tuesday next the Post Office and Printing Office will be removed to the house opposite Mr. Nathan Angell's, near the Sign of the Golden Eagle."¹⁸ Financial difficulties, caused by burdens imposed by the stamp act and by inability to collect dilatory subscriptions, forced the suspension of the *Gazette* early in 1767. Goddard spent the next 25 years in newspaper work in Philadelphia and Baltimore, and of his own initiative established the United States Post Office in 1775.¹⁹ He married Abigail Angell in 1786, and six years later they returned to Rhode Island and resided in Johnston, in the house erected by Thomas Clemence in 1680 (page 16) and purchased 60 years later by John Angell, Abigail's grandfather.

Publication of the *Gazette* was resumed, after a six-month interval, by Mrs. Sarah Goddard, mother of the former editor, who secured as partner John Carter of Philadelphia, former apprentice of Benjamin Franklin.²⁰ It came into Carter's possession in 1768. In the following year he married Amey Crawford, sister of Mrs. John Updike who dwelt in the house at the present corner of North Main and Meeting streets, and set about the erection of a building, to serve both as shop and dwelling, on the land east of the Updikes'. The first floor was designed as a printing shop and book shop, and the upper stories as his residence. The *Gazette* was printed there commencing with the issue of December 5, 1772. The "Sign of Shakespear's Head," carved out of wood and fancifully painted, was erected upon a high pole in front of the shop.²¹ The building, now owned by Shakespeare's Head Association, stands at 21 Meeting Street. It is of frame construction, three stories high above a stone basement, with a hipped roof and large center chimney (illustration, page 42). John Carter was postmaster from 1772 to 1790, and during his incumbency the post office was located in Shakespeare's Head. The immediate neighborhood, which included the Colony House, the Brick Schoolhouse (page 43), and the Quaker Meeting House (where town meetings were held), as well as various taverns and shops, constituted the civic center of the period.

The first theatrical performance in Providence was given by David Douglas and a company of players in a playhouse on Gaol Lane (Meeting Street) in 1762.²² A flood of protests immediately arose as a result of "the many mischiefs which arise from public stage plays, interludes, and other theatrical entertainments, which not only occasion great and unnecessary expenses, and discourage industry and frugality, but likewise tend generally to increase immorality, impiety and contempt of religion." Accordingly, the General Assembly passed an act in August, 1762, to prevent the carrying on of stage plays and, in order to insure its immediate enforcement, the officers of the town of Providence were

17. Dorr, p. 129.

18. See page 45. The printing office and Angell's house were on the west side of the Towne street, on opposite corners of the present Elizabeth Street. The "Golden Eagle" was north of Angell's lot.

19. Lawrence C. Wroth, "William Goddard and his Friends," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XVII, 34.

20. John Carter Brown Woods, "John Carter," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XI, 101.

21. *R.I.H.S.C.*, V, 201.

22. Staples, p. 206.

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directed “forthwith . . . to immediately proclaim the aforesaid act, by beat of drum, through the streets of the compact part of said town of Providence”.²³

In June, 1765, a number of farmers living in the northern part of Providence petitioned the General Assembly to erect a separate township out of the northern lands. In spite of protests made by merchants of the town against further reducing its area the petition was granted by setting off a new town, named North Providence, on the territory north of the following bounds: beginning “at the new bridge, near to the hill called Solitary Hill [near Olneyville Square]; thence, bounding on Wanasquatucket River, until it comes to the northwest corner of the town’s land, at the east end of a place called Forestack Meadow [the present corner of Promenade and Holden streets]; thence, [north] easterly on a straight line to the middle of the mill bridge [Schley Square]; thence on a due east line until it



R.I.H.S.

Shakespeare’s Head, 1772, 21 Meeting Street.

comes to Seaconck River [in Blackstone Park, 500 feet north of Angell Street] . . .”²⁴ This was the fourth and last reduction of the territorial limits of Providence (see pages 29, 36). The first reannexation was effected in June, 1767, in response to a petition by merchants and tradesmen residing in a portion of the area set off in 1765, whose business connections were in Providence. The bounds, as adjusted, extended northerly from Forestack Meadow “to the northwest corner of the burying land [North Burial Ground]; and then, easterly and southerly, by said burying ground . . . until it comes to . . . Herrington’s Lane [Rochambeau Avenue]; then easterly by . . . said lane until it comes to the dividing line between the lands of William Brown and Phineas Brown [now the Swan Point Cemetery-Butler Hospital line]; and then by said line easterly to Seaconck River.”²⁵

The first stage coach route, maintaining a regular schedule, was instituted by Thomas

23. *R.I.C.R.*, VI, 325. The Act was repealed in 1792 (page 60).

25. *Ibid*, VI, 528. See maps, pages 69, 130.

24. *Ibid*, 439.

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Sabin in 1767. It carried passengers every Tuesday morning from Olney's Tavern (North Main and Olney streets) to Boston and made the return trip on Thursdays.²⁶

An attempt was made in 1767 to establish a system of free schools;²⁷ although the proposal was defeated its agitation resulted in the erection of the first brick schoolhouse in Providence. It was built on Gaol Lane (Meeting Street) where it still stands, now used as a nursery school for crippled children. Another schoolhouse, known as Whipple Hall, was erected in the same year on land near the north end of Benefit Street, conveyed by John Whipple. A committee composed of John Jenckes, John Brown, Nathanael Greene, Charles Keene, and Samuel Thurber entered into agreement with Joshua Spooner for its construction December 27, 1767, by which Spooner was "to find all the materials . . . and build a schoolhouse . . . 26 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 10 foot post to be completely finished with



R.I.H.S.

"A S.W. view of the College in Providence together with the president's house & gardens," from an old engraving by S. Hill after a drawing by D. Leonard.

a little house and a good white pine fence."²⁸ The Benefit Street School (erected 1840) now stands on its site at the corner of Benefit and Halsey streets. The Brick Schoolhouse and Whipple Hall became district schoolhouses upon the inauguration of the free school system in 1800 (page 62).

On the hilltop of the Neck, overlooking the commercial part of Providence along the Towne street, the first college edifice was erected in 1770. The college, incorporated by act of the General Assembly March 3, 1764, was established originally at Warren as Rhode Island College. Having determined to remove to Providence the corporation purchased an eight-acre tract which constituted the central part of the original home lots of Daniel Abbott. Chad Brown and John Warner (page 11), and included a lane (College Street) extending westerly to Benefit Street. The building committee, consisting of Stephen Hopkins, John Jenckes and John Brown, delegated the preparation of a "complete model"

26. Field, II, 544.

28. *Providence Town Papers* 0883, Dec. 27, 1767.

27. Staples, p. 496.

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R.I.H.S.

Joseph Tillinghast House, c. 1767, 403 South Main Street.



R.I.H.S.

Russell House, 1772, 118 North Main Street

of the edifice to Joseph Brown, an amateur architect, astronomer and physicist. Associated with him were Mr. Hopkins and President Manning. The design was similar to Nassau Hall at the College of New Jersey (Princeton), although somewhat smaller and plainer. Ground was broken March 27, 1770, the foundation stone was laid May 14, and the building was opened a year later. The work was executed by the firm of Nicholas Brown and Company who volunteered to take entire charge of erecting the college building and the president's house.²⁹

The College Edifice, now University Hall (the name was changed by the corporation in 1823) is a four-story building, 150 feet by 46 feet, with a center projection on each side (illustration, page 43). The walls are brick with segmental-arched windows and doorways, and the wood cornice is broken by pediments over the center section. The edifice has a hipped roof and a deck balustrade, and a cupola rises from the center in which a bell was installed in 1792. During Revolutionary years, while college exercises were suspended, the building served as barracks for American and French troops (page 52). It was altered many times, in ensuing years, and was extensively remodeled in 1940 (page 264).

Following a generous gift to the college by Nicholas Brown, Jr., in 1804, the corporation changed its name to Brown University. In order of founding it ranks seventh in American colleges, having been preceded by Harvard (1636), William and Mary (1693), Yale (1701), Princeton (1746), Columbia (1754), and the University of Pennsylvania (1755).³⁰

As the 18th century advanced the typical house plan underwent modifications which provided increased heating comfort during the cold winter months as well as a better circulation acquired by means of more liberal hall space. The evolution is illustrated by the plans shown on page 46. In the single-chimney type of dwelling (plan A), which had prevailed since the early years of the century (page 30), the small stairway gave access only to the front rooms. A modification of that plan provided a central hall (plan B), extending through the house with two rooms on each side and two center chimneys, each having back-to-back fireplaces in each pair of rooms. By a later refinement, effected after the Revolutionary War, the chimneys and their fireplaces were set in the outside walls, (plan C) an arrangement particularly adapted to brick houses.

The "B" plan is illustrated by two present-day survivors of the period: a typical frame dwelling at 403 South Main Street, erected by Captain Joseph Tillinghast about 1767 (illustration, page 44) and an elaborate brick mansion at 118 North Main Street built by Joseph and William Russell in 1772 (illustration, page 44). The gable-roofed, two-and-a-half story Tillinghast house is the only well-preserved survival of the pre-Revolutionary period on the lower part of South Main Street. It has two chimneys, centering on the roof ridge, and two pedimented entrances, one on the front and the other leading from James Street to a side stairway hall located in the space adjoining the north chimney. The Russell mansion, which was built in 1772 where the "Sign of the Golden Eagle"³¹ had stood (now 118 North Main Street), has three full stories with brick walls, each floor marked by a belt course, and a hipped roof rises from the finely decorated cornice to a small monitor. Of particular note is the Corinthian entrance, crowned by a rich entablature with curved

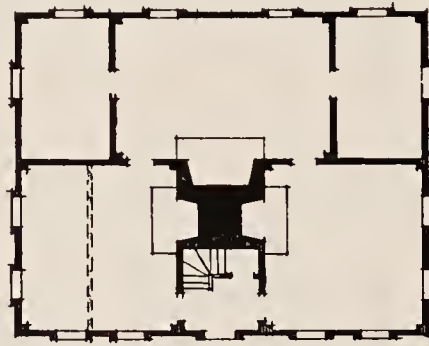
29. Bronson, pp. 54-56; Reuben A. Guild, *Early History of Brown University* (Providence, 1897), pp. 139, 151.

30. Bronson, p. 3.

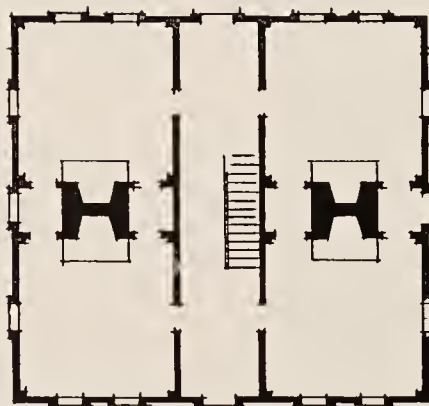
31. See page 41. This was a shop maintained by the Russells where "velvets, broadcloths, Superfine, of scarlet for mens and womens long coats; also paper, looking glasses and books" were sold, as advertised in the *Gazette*.

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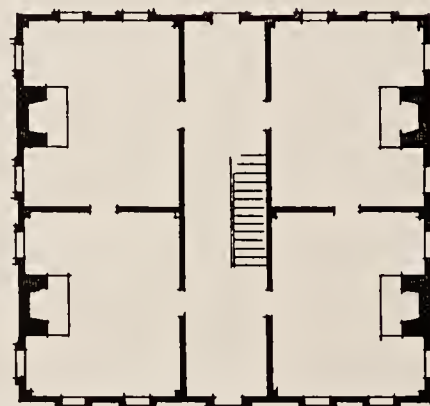
pediment. The dwelling came into possession of Zachariah Allen about 1800 and was transformed, 75 years later, into the Clarendon Hotel, continuing as such for another half-century. Now utilized for business purposes, raised a full story for the installation of shops, and stripped of its fine inside finish, much of which has been removed to the Brooklyn Museum, only the outside fabric remains to recall its former charm.



A



B



C

R.I.H.S.

Typical 18th century house plans.

CHAPTER 5 1772 - 1784

THE first official list of street names was adopted by the town in 1772¹ in which 35 names were enumerated and defined. The streets so designated constituted the built-up part of the town and the listing is of value in reconstructing the highway pattern of the period just before the Revolution.²

The original Towne street was given four names: Water Street (the present South Main), King Street (North Main from Market Square to North Court). William's Street (North Court to Mill; not to be confused with the present Williams Street), and Constitution Street (Mill to Olney). The old road to Pawtucket was named Prince Street (North Main from Olney to the North Burial Ground). "What is commonly called the Back Street" was officially named Benefit Street. Wickenden Lane, Transit Lane,³ Power's Lane, Planet Lane, and Hanover (College) Street⁴ ran east from Water Street. The former Gaol Lane, extending easterly from King Street, was re-named Meeting Street as far as Benefit and retained its former name farther east. Bowen Alley and Star Lane ran east from William's Street and Mill Street branched to the northwest, crossing Moshassuck river and continuing as Charles Street. Stampers Lane (now absorbed in North Main) branched north from Constitution Street. The original Dexter's Lane, later known as Olney's Lane, extending east from Constitution Street, was named Liberty Street in honor of a Liberty Tree dedicated July 25, 1768;⁵ the extension of that highway (now abandoned) westward to Moshassuck river was named Olney Street. Moshassuck Lane (Bark Street) extended southerly from that street to the mill bridge.

The highway (page 40) leading "from the Parade on the East side of the Bridge Westward to the parting of the Road by Jacob Whitman" (Market Square and Westminster Street to Turks Head) was named Market Street. Other streets identified on Weybosset side included Westminster (Turks Head to Cathedral Square), Weybosset (Turks Head to Dorrance), Broad (Weybosset, from Dorrance to Abbott Park), Pawtuxet (Broad, from Abbott Park to Comstock Avenue, then the town line), High (Weybosset and Westminster from Abbott Park to Olneyville, Orange, Union (from Weybosset to Westminster), School (Mathewson, from Weybosset to Westminster), Snow (Pine, from Chestnut to Richmond), Dock (Page), and Ship (Clifford and Ship, from Broad to Eddy).

The problem of water supply was met by many of the Neck dwellers by the digging of wells and the construction of rain-water cisterns. The town pump, located on the Fenner estate, north of the Town Parade (the northwest corner of Market Square and North Main Street), was used as a neighborhood supply. As Weybosset side was developed it was found that the water in the wells, dug near the swampy shores, was too brackish to drink, so "it fell to the lot of the boys, some of whom were negros . . . to go with two pails and a hoop,

1. *Record Book of Deeds*, 20 (1), 01.

2. Not all of the town highways were included in the list of street names. It omitted the present Hope and Angell streets which were then roads to ferries, as well as the present Rochambeau Avenue, then the town boundary and known as Hearnden's or Harrington's Lane.

3. Named for the observation of the transit of Venus, in 1769, through a telescope set up on the highway.

4. Laid out as Rosemary Lane, 1720; changed to Presbyterian Lane, 1727. Named College Street, 1823.

5. Staples, p. 222.

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across the bridge for a supply”⁶ at the pump. Relief from that condition was provided by two companies, chartered in 1772, which constructed water supply systems by means of water logs. One company, formed by inhabitants of the region north of Cowpen Point,⁷ supplied its customers from a fresh water spring on the John Field farm, near the present corner of Clifford and Chestnut streets. The other company, known as Rawson’s Fountain Society, constructed a “fountain” near Rawson’s tanyard (Dean and Fountain streets) and laid an aqueduct from there easterly to Aborn Street.⁸

The Parade occupied a strategic position as the crossroads between the Neck and the expanding Weybosset side. It was 123 feet wide and included, along its northern border, the roadway leading from the newly-designated King Street to the bridge abutments (page 33). The latter were in alignment with the present easterly line of Canal Street and elevated about ten feet above low tide. The area south of the bridge abutments, used for many years as a market place (page 35), was ungraded and unimproved and was characterized as “deep filthy dock in which the tidewater flowed up to the west side of the Main Street.”⁹ On the south border of the Parade was the Abbott Still House (page 33). Dr. Ephraim Bowen’s mansion, erected about 1739, stood at the present northeast corner of North Main and College streets and Governor (1727–32) Joseph Jenckes’s residence adjoined it on the north; these houses were replaced, in 1823, by the Franklin House and Roger Williams Bank Building, respectively (page 89). Deputy Governor (1778–80) Jabez Bowen resided next north of the Jenckes house in a dwelling, erected about 1745 by Daniel Abbott, later known as the Manufacturers Hotel (illustration, page 120). From its balcony, according to tradition, was proclaimed the accession of George III of England in 1760 and the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The house was replaced in 1850 by What Cheer Block (page 120). Facing the Parade, north of the roadway to the bridge and west of the town pump, stood a row of wooden houses.

For a number of years consideration had been given to the erection of a market house on the Parade, a project which advanced in 1771 when the General Assembly acted favorably on a petition, signed by a number of townspeople, for a lottery to raise the necessary funds.¹⁰ The scheme of the lottery was published in the *Gazette* April 28, 1772, naming as directors Moses Brown, James Lovell, David Harris and Elisha Mowry, Jr.

Before construction of the building was undertaken it was necessary to do something about the poor condition of the Parade. Accordingly it was filled and graded by John Wiley, by authority of the director of the lottery, and a retaining wall was built southerly from the bridge abutment under contract between John Brown and the town.¹¹

Plans for the market house (illustration page 120) were prepared by Joseph Brown in collaboration with Stephen Hopkins, and Zephaniah Andrews was the master mason. Three of the Brown brothers already were identified with the project; the eldest brother, Nicholas,

6. Stone, p. 25.

7. See page 24. “When the John Field farm was opened for settlement at Cowpen Point the Eddy family established a shipyard there, and so many of the same name were engaged in building vessels and houses that soon the ‘Point’ was called ‘Eddy’s neighborhood’ or ‘Eddy’s Point.’” (Chace, p. 6.)

8. Staples, p. 621.

9. John A. Howland in *Providence Journal*, March 15, 1883. At an earlier period the tide rose to the east side of the highway, as indicated by the uncovering of a rock bearing an iron staple and ring when excavations for Franklin House were made in 1823 (Dorr, p. 105).

10. *R.I.C.R.*, VII, 76. The scope of the lottery included, in addition to the market house, the paving of “the street leading to the Court House” (North and South Court streets).

11. *Providence Town Papers*, II, pp. 54, 75.

1772 - 1784

now became a participant, by laying the corner stone in June 1773.¹² The building was 40 by 80 feet in area and two stories high, the walls of the lower floor comprising a series of rugged arches of which those at the west end were open to provide direct access from the



R.I.H.S.

From a print by S. Hill, showing the church in 1789

parade to the merchants' stalls within the building. The second story was divided into offices, some of which were used by the town. The stalls were built in 1776 and were disposed of at public vendue, and new hay scales were erected near the northeast corner of the

12. *Providence Gazette*, June 12, 1773.

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building. Commencing in 1779, and for a number of years thereafter, a portion of the building was used for a fire engine house. During the stay of the French troops in Providence, in 1781, the Market House was appropriated for their use (page 54), and after their departure it was refitted and its surroundings were improved by the planting of trees. The town clerk's office was established in the building in 1793, and when Providence was incorporated as a city in 1832 the city council held meetings there. A third story was added in 1797 by St. John's Lodge of Masons in which the first masonic hall in Rhode Island was installed.¹³ The building has undergone various alterations since that time (pages 134, 270).

The outstanding architectural work of the pre-Revolutionary period was the First Baptist Meeting House (illustrations, pages 49, 92). The Charitable Baptist Society, having outgrown its church erected in 1726 (page 26), acquired, in 1744, the lots of John Angell and Amaziah Waterman, extending from King (North Main) to Benefit Street, bounded on the north by a 30-foot gangway known as Angell's Lane (Thomas Street) and on the south by Waterman's Lane (Waterman Street).¹⁴ Joseph Brown, Jonathan Hammond and Comfort Wheaton were commissioned "to make a Draught of a House," a project in which Mr. Brown took the lead.¹⁵ The cost of the building was £7000, of which £5000 was subscribed and the balance raised by a lottery. John Brown, brother of Joseph, was in charge of construction. Ground was broken for the foundations June 3, 1774, and the first service was held in the meeting house May 28, 1775.

The plan is square, in New England Meeting House tradition, 80 by 80 feet, with doors on all four sides and a projecting vestibule on the front.¹⁶ Above the vestibule a steeple rises 185 feet above the ground, the design of which was adapted from a drawing taken from James Gibbs's *Book of Architecture*, published in London, 1728. The main auditorium, reached by a double stairway from the vestibule, has a central nave and two side aisles. Above the aisles are galleries, supported by Ionic columns. The nave is covered by an elliptical barrel vault, and the galleries by groined vaults. The seating capacity is 1400, large enough to accommodate more than one quarter of the town's population at the time of its erection. In view of the fact that the meeting house was erected "for the publick Worship of Almighty God; and also for holding Commencement in," and has ever since continued for both purposes, its size has been justified.¹⁷

Probably the finest of the pre-Revolutionary dwellings on the Neck was the one designed by Joseph Brown as his own residence, built in 1774, and still preserved at 50 South Main Street. The Field Garrison House (page 9), last survivor of the 17th century dwellings on the Towne street, was then standing on the lot.¹⁸ Nearly opposite was the three-story brick dwelling erected by Nicholas Brown about 1759 which stood until 1930 at 29 South Main Street, its site now incorporated in the park in front of the court house. Joseph Brown's house is brick, two and a half stories above a brownstone basement, its distinguishing features including a curved baroque pediment, inspired by the works of Sir

13. A bronze tablet on the building records the masonic data.

14. *Providence Deed Book*, XIX, 240, 257; XX, 188, 391. The 1774 purchases did not include a lot of about 5600 square feet at the corner of King Street and Waterman's Lane; this was acquired by the society in 1857 (Deed Book CXLV, 296).

15. Norman M. Isham, *The Meeting House of the First Baptist Church* (Providence, 1925), p. 1.

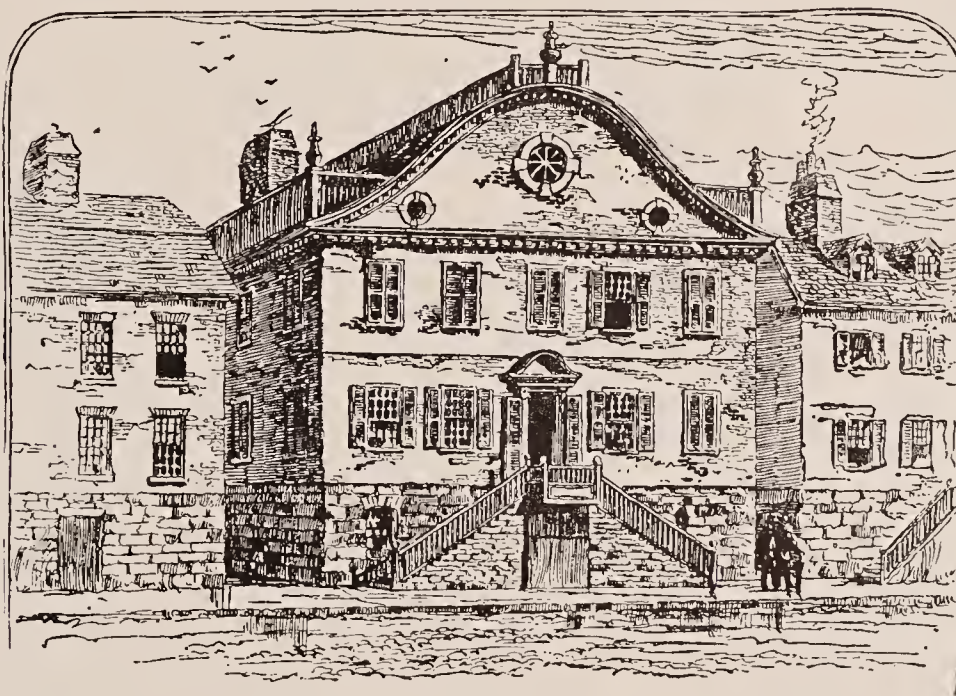
16. The rear wing is a later addition.

17. Bronson, p. 63. A smaller building was originally planned and the lottery was held to raise additional funds to accommodate the college. Since 1776 Brown commencements, with two exceptions, have been held in the meeting house.

18. Stone, p. 23. See also page 9.

Christopher Wren, and a wood cornice enriched with consoles and dentils. Originally the main entrance (now replaced by a window) was located in the center of the main story above the basement and was reached by a double flight of stone steps (illustration below). The stairway, mantels and other details of inside finish are very elaborate. From 1801 to 1929 it was the home of the Providence Bank (page 62), later owned and occupied by the Counting House Corporation.

During the years immediately preceding the Revolution thoughts of national liberty, and means for its attainment, took precedence over local matters in the minds of the colonists. The "first overt act of violence offered to the British authorities in America" occurred in Newport, July 19, 1769, when His Majesty's ship *Liberty* was burned.¹⁹ The people of Providence manifested their resistance to the Crown three years later by burning the British revenue schooner *Gaspee* where she had run aground off Namquit Point on the west shore of Narragansett bay. The group who accomplished that act assembled in the



R.I.H.S.

Joseph Brown house, 1774, 50 South Main Street, showing the original entrance and steps. Taken from Greene's *Providence Plantations*.

evening of June 9, 1772, at a dwelling on Water Street (South Main, northeast corner of Planet) where James Sabin kept a house of board and entertainment for gentlemen. Colonel Ephraim Bowen described the events of the evening, as follows: "About 9 o'clock I took my father's gun and my powder horn and bullets and went to Mr. Sabin's, and found the southeast room²⁰ full of people, where I loaded my gun, and all remained there till about 10 o'clock, some casting bullets in the kitchen, and others making arrangements for departure, when orders were given to cross the street to Fenner's wharf and embark . . ."²¹ The group, under command of Captain Abraham Whipple, thereupon set off in boats provided by John Brown and accomplished the patriotic mission. In commemoration of the event the name Namquit Point later was changed to Gaspee Point.

19. Arnold, II, 297.

20. When the house was razed in 1891 the "Gaspee" room, so called, was moved and attached to the Talbot house at 209 Williams Street.

21. Arnold, II, 319.

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In December, 1774, the General Assembly appointed Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward Rhode Island delegates to the Continental Congress. British tea was burned near the Market House, March 2, 1775.²² A military company, known as the United Company of the Train of Artillery, was established in Providence April 22d of that year, three days after the Battle of Lexington. Other events of the year included the capture of the tender of the British frigate *Rose* by the armed sloop *Katy*, chartered by the colony from John Brown and commanded by Captain Whipple who had, by that act, the distinction of firing the first authorized naval shot of the Revolution;²³ the Colonial appointment of Nathanael Greene as Brigadier General of the Army of Observation; and the Congressional appointment of Esek Hopkins as Commander-in-Chief of the American Navy. On May 4, 1776, the General Assembly met in the Colony House in Newport and formally renounced its allegiance to Great Britain. The Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress at Philadelphia July 4th and, upon its ratification by the General Assembly two weeks later, the Colony of Rhode Island became the State of Rhode Island and the Colony House was known thenceforth as the State House.

Preparations for war had been under way since the Battle of Lexington; cannon were cast at Hope Furnace (page 37) in Scituate,²⁴ guns, muskets, swords and gunpowder were manufactured in the environs of Providence; shipyards were busy building warships, among which were the *Providence* and *Warren*, launched in Providence in May, 1776;²⁵ and troops were being recruited throughout Rhode Island. Meanwhile a number of Providence merchants were engaged in privateering and brought back rich prizes to their home port.²⁶

In December, 1776, a British fleet entered Rhode Island waters, closed Narragansett bay to shipping, and landed troops who proceeded to occupy Newport. Many citizens of that town fled to Providence where the opportunity was taken to repay the hospitality extended to its own people by Newport 100 years earlier in the Indian war.²⁷ Exercises at the college were suspended, the College Edifice was appropriated as a barracks and hospital for troops,²⁸ and the Brick Schoolhouse (page 43) was converted into an arsenal for storing ammunition. Beacons were erected on Prospect Hill,²⁹ near the present corner of Prospect and Meeting streets, and on Weybosset side, near the corner of Beacon and Point streets, to alarm the inhabitants in case of an enemy's approach. Fortifications were built and batteries established at Foxes Hill (page 4), Robin Hill,³⁰ Field's Point,³¹ Prospect Hill,³² Fort Hill,³³ and on a tract of high land, bounded by the present Broad, Foster,

22. A tablet on the Market House records the event.

23. George L. Miner, "John Brown's *Katy*," *R. I. Hist.*, II, 75.

24. Field, III, 371.

25. Greene, p. 61.

26. Stone, p. 82.

27. Howard W. Preston, *The Battle of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1928), p. 10. See also page 12.

28. Bronson, p. 67. See also page 45.

29. Edward Field, *Revolutionary Defenses in Rhode Island* (Providence, 1896), p. 43. A beacon had been erected on the same spot, in 1667, as a warning against an attack by Indians.

30. *Ibid*, p. 58. Robin Hill, now largely obliterated, was located a short distance west from the shore of Providence river between Sassafras Point and Field's Point. A municipal quay wall was erected along the harbor line, 1912-14 (page 219).

31. *Ibid*, p. 62. This fort, later known as Fort Independence, stood on a high bluff on the southerly part of Robin Hill, at the west end of the present Georgia Avenue. See page 222.

32. *Ibid*, p. 73. The fortifications were on the brow of the hill, surrounding the beacon, enclosing an area bounded, approximately, by Prospect, Meeting, Congdon and Bowen streets.

33. *Ibid*, p. 76. The hill, rising from Hog Pen Point at the entrance to Seekonk river, was a part of Rehoboth, Massachusetts, at the time of the Revolution.

1772 - 1784

Chestnut and Friendship streets, named Fort Sullivan,³⁴ and redoubts were constructed on Ferry Lane (Angell Street).³⁵

Although the commerce of Providence was crippled by the blockade of Narragansett bay, its farms uncultivated for lack of men, and many of its people destitute, the town escaped enemy occupation. Newport, on the other hand, was in enemy hands for nearly three years and before the British had evacuated in October, 1779, many of its houses had been destroyed and its prosperity crushed.

On August 2, 1778, a few months after the signing of the French treaty of alliance, the Marquis de Lafayette visited Providence.³⁶ Two years later French troops, under command



R.I.H.S.

Hoyle Tavern, 1783-1890, junction of Westminster and Cranston streets, established by Obadiah Brown, 1739.

of the Comte de Rochambeau, arrived in Rhode Island and, on June 25th, appropriated the College Edifice which had been evacuated by Federal troops.³⁷ Rochambeau was in Providence that summer as guest of Deputy Governor Jabez Bowen at his home on the Town Parade (page 48) and General Washington was a visitor at the same house in March, 1781, and was entertained also at the State House. In June, 1781, the French army spent several days in Providence on its way to join Washington's army at Yorktown, camped

34. Field, *Revolutionary Defenses in Rhode Island*, p. 75. Named for General John Sullivan who administered the military affairs of the state in 1778. The fortifications were removed in 1784 when part of the hill was dug away and the material used to fill the low marshland along the river at its base.

35. *Ibid*, p. 67.

36. Howard W. Preston, "Lafayette's Visits to Rhode Island," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XIX, 3.

37. Bronson, p. 71.

THE NECK

on a plain near the present Hayward Park (Plain Street takes its name), and used the Market House for the storage of baggage.³⁸ Rochambeau again visited Governor Bowen, and his aides were guests at the homes of Nicholas Brown, Joseph Brown (page 50), Joseph Nightingale, Joseph Russell, Benjamin Cushing, and other citizens.³⁹ In the fall of 1782 the French troops, on their return march, camped on a plain north of the present Rochambeau Avenue between North Main and Hope streets.⁴⁰ Before making his adieux Rochambeau gave "a very splendid ball at Hacker's Hall to the ladies and gentlemen of the town."⁴¹ Hostilities with Great Britain were discontinued January 20, 1783 and the treaty of peace was signed in Paris September 3rd. General Washington was elected President of the United States May 25, 1787 and the Constitution was signed the following September 27th, and approved by the Rhode Island General Assembly May 29, 1790.



R.I.H.S.

Golden Ball Inn, 1784-1941, Benefit Street.

During the Revolutionary period the office of town constable (page 8) was supplemented by the establishment of a night watch, consisting of four men, two of whom were on duty each night.⁴²

In 1783, shortly after the cessation of hostilities, Joseph Hoyle purchased an inn, at the junction of the Plainfield and Cranston roads,⁴³ which had been established by Obadiah

38. Howard W. Preston, "Rochambeau and the French Troops," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XVII, 1.

39. *Ibid*, pp. 12-13. Joseph Nightingale resided near the present street railway tunnel portal on North Main Street before erecting his house on Benefit Street in 1791 (page 64). Benjamin Cushing's house was built on the Towne street (North Main) about 1731 and was moved up the hill to the rear of 38 North Court Street about 1860, where it still stands. The Russell house (page 45) survives at 118 North Main Street.

40. *Ibid*, p. 19. Rochambeau Avenue, originally laid out in 1685 (page 15) and known successively as Hearnden's Lane, Harrington's Lane and North Street, was re-named in honor of the count about 1895. In 1791 Horse Pasture Lane was constructed from Hearnden's Lane to Olney Street and was later named Camp Street in recognition of the French encampment. A monument to the French army was erected at the corner of Summit Avenue and Brewster Street in 1907 by the Rhode Island Society, Sons of the American Revolution (page 222).

41. *Providence Gazette*, Nov. 25, 1782. See also page 37.

42. Greene, p. 113.

43. See page 23. The intersection, known for many years as Hoyle Square, is now identified as Canonicus Square. The Citizens Savings Bank was built on the site in 1921 (page 245).

1772 - 1784

Brown in 1739,⁴⁴ and made it the leading tavern on Weybosset side. It was frequented by drovers and farmers as well as by "jovial parties of young men and women [who had to go] far around in the country in their excursions to wind up in a dance and a good time."⁴⁵ It continued as Hoyle Tavern, (see illustration, page 53) under a succession of landlords, until 1886, and was torn down in 1890.

In 1784 Henry Rice opened the Golden Ball Inn (illustration, page 54) on Benefit Street, near the State House, a large four-story building with a double balcony extending along the front. Among its distinguished guests were the Marquis de Lafayette in 1784, Mrs. John Adams in 1789, and President Washington and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson in 1790.⁴⁶

44. Horace G. Belcher, "The Old Hoyle Tavern," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XXVIII, 41.

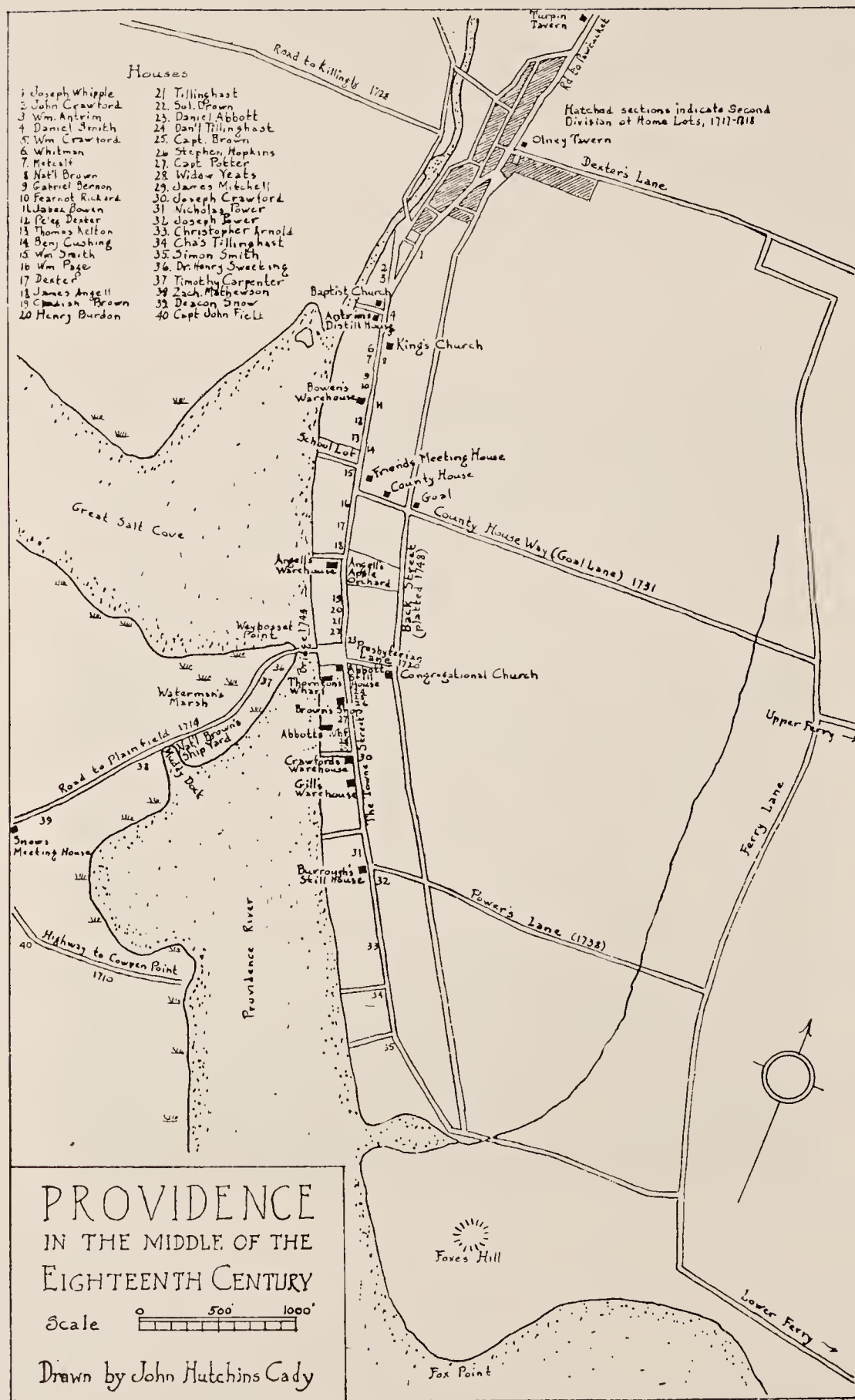
45. Richard M. Bayles, *History of Providence County* (New York, 1891), I, 307.

46. *R.I.H.S.C.*, XIX, 8-10; *R. I. Hist.*, I, 99. In later years the building was extensively altered and its balconies were removed. It was known, successively, as Daggett's Tavern, Roger Williams Hotel, Alpheus Ammadon's Inn, Globe Tavern and, finally, Mansion House. It was demolished in 1941.



Betsey Williams Cottage, 1778, Roger Williams Park.

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R.I.H.S.,

From "The Divisions of the Home Lots of Providence," *R.I.H.S.C.*, XXXI, 103.

CHAPTER 6 1784 - 1800

THE town soon recovered from the effects of the war and attained such a degree of wealth that property valuations nearly trebled between 1782 and the end of the century. Newport was surpassed in the number of inhabitants and, by the year 1800, Providence had become the largest town of the state with a population of 7,614.

The town's growth and development during that period were influenced by the activities of its commercial and industrial leaders, among whom were Nicholas and John Brown, Joseph Nightingale, Welcome Arnold, Thomas Lloyd Halsey, John Innes Clark, Philip and Zachariah Allen, Joseph and William Russell, and John Corliss.

The firm of Nicholas Brown and Company (page 37) had dissolved in 1774.¹ Moses retired from worldly pursuits in that year, joined the Quakers, and became an abolitionist; he resumed activities later in the century, founding the Providence Bank (page 62) and launching cotton manufacturing in the state (page 61). Nicholas, Joseph and John continued their mercantile pursuits individually, all retaining an interest in the spermaceti works and the furnace (page 37). Joseph Brown, despite his business connections, was essentially a scientist and became a member of the college faculty in 1784.² He continued his architectural work in the design of John Brown's house (page 63), but died in 1785 before its completion. John Brown was active in the development of the south shore of the Neck, at the foot of Tockwotton Hill (page 61) from which point he established trade with the East Indies in 1787, operating a fleet of ships including the *General Washington*, *Warren*, and *President Washington*, the latter launched in a shipyard near Fox Point in 1791.³ About this time he entered into partnership with his son-in-law, John Francis (page 63). Nicholas Brown had taken George Benson as partner in 1783, a firm to which Nicholas, Jr. and Thomas Poynton Ives later were admitted. Mr. Ives married Hope Brown, daughter of Nicholas, Sr. shortly after the latter's death in 1791. In that year the firm name became Brown, Benson and Ives; and on Mr. Benson's retirement in 1796 the partnership of Brown and Ives entered upon its long history which continued until 1952.⁴ The firm followed Brown and Francis in trade with the East Indies in the *Rising Sun*, *John Jay*, *Ann* and *Hope*, and other merchant ships.⁵

Following the passage by the Congress, August 4, 1790, of an act in relation to duties payable for imports, Rhode Island was divided into two customs districts located, respectively, at Providence and Newport. The office at Providence was established on Water Street (South Main, corner of Custom Avenue) where it was continued until 1857. A total of 129 sailing vessels belonging to the port of Providence was listed in 1791, including 11 ships, 35 brigs, one snow, one polacca, 25 schooners, and 56 sloops.⁶ By the end of the century 58 wharves had been erected along the water front, most of which were on the shore of the Neck from India Point to Smith Street.

In 1792 the first steamboat made its appearance in Rhode Island waters, the *Experi-*

1. James B. Hedges, *The Browns of Providence Plantations*, p. 18. John withdrew from the firm in 1771, Moses in 1773.

2. Bronson, p. 81.

4. Hedges, pp. 19, 20.

5. Field, II, 465.

3. Field, II, 465.

6. *R.I.H.S.P.*, VI, 196.

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ment, Elijah Ormsbee, captain, builder, and owner.⁷ It was not a complete success, however, and 25 years elapsed before another was seen in Narragansett bay (page 85).

Pursuant to an act by the General Assembly in 1790, granting a lottery to raise £3000, Weybosset Bridge was again rebuilt in 1792, 120 feet long between abutment walls and 56 feet wide, with a draw of the lift type.⁸ The east abutment was built into the river, about 40 feet west of the shore line which then followed, approximately, the present east line of Canal Street; the wall was extended northerly as far as the present Steeple Street and a new waterfront street was constructed on filled land. The west abutment was nearly in line with the present west line of Washington Row, as in the case of the 1764 bridge, and the wall was extended southerly in the river, about 50 feet east of the present west line of Dyer Street, terminating at a slip located between the present Post Office Court and Custom House Street.⁹ South of the slip was Long Wharf (see map, page 144) which extended from Weybosset Street to the river, its end in alignment with the river wall.¹⁰ Below Long Wharf the original shore line, running nearly midway between Weybosset and Pine streets as far as Muddy Dock (Dorrance and Weybosset streets), was practically unchanged (see map, page 70).

At about the time that the bridge was constructed the Exchange Coffee House (illustration, page 59) was built near its easterly end, at the corner of the Parade and the new waterfront street (now Canal Street). It was planned and erected by David McLane and Paul Draper and is reported to have been the first wood building in the town in which modern framing methods were used, abandoning the traditional mortises and tenons (page 30). The establishment provided food, refreshments and entertainment for a few years and later the building was occupied by insurance companies, newspaper offices and other business concerns.¹¹ It was demolished in the middle of the 19th century.

Acts were passed by the General Assembly in May, 1792, granting the erection of two toll bridges over Seekonk river. Up to that time no bridge had spanned that waterway at Providence and the only means of crossing to Rehoboth, Massachusetts, were by the upper ferry at Narrow Passage and Fuller's ferry at Tockwotton Point, established in 1679 and 1739, respectively (pages 13, 33). Authority for the erection of the bridges was granted to two groups of citizens who had subscribed sums of money for the purpose and were incorporated, respectively, as "The Proprietors of the Central Bridge, leading to and from Providence" and "The Providence South Bridge Society in the town of Providence." Each corporation was required to install in its bridge, and to maintain at all times "a convenient draw, twenty-four feet wide" and to appoint as toll collector "an able-bodied man, to aid and assist in raising the said draw, for the purpose of vessels passing, and in lowering the same." It was provided, in each case, that the toll should "not exceed the present rate of ferriage, established by law" and that "whenever the said toll shall amount in value to all costs, charges and expenses, in the erecting and keeping in repair the same bridge, with interest thereon, together with . . . a reasonable allowance . . . the said

7. Greene, p. 68.

8. *R.I.C.R.*, X, 395; Staples, p. 359. It will be noted that successive bridges at Weybosset increased in width (14 feet in 1711, 18 feet in 1744, 22 feet in 1764, 56 feet in 1792), and decreased in length as abutment walls were built closer together. See pages 21, 33, and 39 and map page 144.

9. *Record Book No. 7*, p. 238. The area was filled and graded a few years later and West Water (Dyer) Street constructed. See map, page 93.

10. C.E., Harbor Dept., *Chart of Providence River from Weybosset Bridge to the Crook*, No. 0109, 1834.

11. W. R. Danforth, "Pictures of Providence in the Past," *R. I. Hist.*, X, 95. The site is occupied by the west end of the School of Design Auditorium.

toll shall be subject to be regulated by this Assembly.”¹² Central Bridge, as erected in 1793, was a predecessor of the present Red Bridge and the South, or India Bridge spanned the river a short distance south of the present Washington Bridge¹³ (see map, page 70).

The old country road to Pawtucket, established before 1684 as a northerly extension of the Towne street, curved westerly around and over a sand hill east of North Burial Ground before continuing its rather crooked way to the north.¹⁴ A committee appointed by the Town Council “to examine the land eastward of the highway . . . and see if an eligible route for a road is therein contained” reported that “a straight, handsome and convenient street may be had from the house where Amasa Gray now lives [the junction of North Main Street and Branch Avenue] to the corner of Jeremiah Dexter’s stone wall



R.I.H.S.

Coffee House, c. 1792 - c. 1850, Market Square, taken from Greene's *Providence Plantations*.

[the corner of North Main Street and Rochambeau Avenue]¹⁵ . . . and that the same direction may be continued towards Pawtucket nearly straight for about two miles; and that the same will greatly accommodate and beautify the north end of said town, as well as be

12. *R.I.C.R.*, X, 491-492. Moses and Nicholas Brown and 25 others were subscribers for Central Bridge; John and Nicholas Brown, Welcome Arnold, Joseph Nightingale, John Innes Clark and others for South Bridge.

13. Both bridges were rebuilt following a freshet February 15, 1807. India Bridge was carried away in the great gale of 1815 and replaced by a new span and Central Bridge was damaged in the same storm and repaired. Both were conveyed by their owners to the city of Providence, the former in 1860 and the latter in 1869. See pages 83, 143.

14. Dorr, p. 238. See also page 15.

15. The Gray house, later Amasa Gray Tavern, has been demolished. The gambrel-roofed Dexter house (1754) was still standing in 1957 at the northeast corner of North Main Street and Rochambeau Avenue.

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extremely convenient." In order to purchase the necessary land, and construct and pave the road, permission was acquired from the General Assembly in February, 1791, to raise the sum of £900 by means of a lottery.¹⁶ Stage coaches traveled this highway on the "Road from Providence to Boston, Newbury-Port and Portsmouth," charted in the *North American Calendar* for the year 1793.¹⁷

The plain on which the French army had encamped in 1781 (page 54), a tract of about 15 acres extending westerly from the present Plain Street, was developed into the West Burial Ground, composed of a number of independent cemeteries. The two Congregational societies — the First and the Beneficent — purchased from John Field adjacent tracts in 1785 to which the bodies from their former lot (page 26) were removed. The adjoining Proprietors' Burying Ground was laid out by Field in 1792, followed early in the 19th century by the Union, Hope, Manchester and Methodist cemeteries. All of these burial grounds were vacated between 1848 and 1888, following the removal of the bodies and stones to Swan Point Cemetery, North Burial Ground and other spots. The city established Hayward Park (page 165) on the Proprietors' ground and the remainder of the West Burial Ground was platted into streets and building lots.

The production of stage plays, interrupted by decree of the General Assembly in 1762 (page 41), was revived in 1792 when Joseph Harper and his company gave several performances in the Court House. In 1794 Harper fitted up a building in the rear of the Coffee House as a theatre for a season of drama, culminating in the presentation of "The Beggar's Opera." The following year the Providence Theatre was built at the corner of Westminster and School (Mathewson) streets with funds subscribed by John Brown, T. L. Halsey, John Corliss, Cyprian Sterry, George and Jeremiah Olney, and others. The statute against theatrical entertainments was repealed as a result of Mr. Harper's efforts and the Providence Theatre was maintained for a number of years under his management.¹⁸ The building was purchased by Grace Church and altered, in 1832, and was demolished when the present church was built in 1845 (page 126).

Four new fire engines were imported from London in 1792 for operation by volunteer firemen under direction of the fire wards (page 36). These were housed in stations located, respectively, on North Main Street (opposite First Baptist Meeting House), Benefit Street (near Transit Street), Mill Street, and Broad (Weybosset) Street at Muddy Dock (page 35).¹⁹

The night watch, established in 1775 (page 54), was reorganized in 1797 in accordance with rules and regulations of the town council, and was financed by a direct tax on the property of citizens. Headquarters were in a small watch house on the Town Parade from which the men patrolled the streets of the compact part of the town nightly until the ringing of the sunrise bell. The patrols extended north to Benjamin Cozzens' house (North Main Street and Branch Avenue), south to India Point and west to Hoyle Tavern.²⁰

The closing years of the 18th century were marked by a significant increase in manufacturing, a prelude to the industrial era that was to come. In the 17th century, when Providence was a community of planters, the only industrial establishments were the grist

16. *R.I.C.R.*, X, 413.

17. *Wheeler's North-American Calendar or an Almanack for the year of our Lord 1793*, printed at Providence and sold by B. Wheeler.

18. *Providence Magazine*, Oct., 1916, p. 647. A drop curtain, painted by Worrall and hung in the theatre in 1812, is owned by the Rhode Island Historical Society. It shows a view of the East Side of Providence about 1808 as seen from Federal Hill (illustration, page 72).

19. Greene, p. 122.

20. *Ibid*, p. 113.

mills, saw mills, lime kilns, leather tanneries, and blacksmith shops. In the early 18th century shipbuilding, brick manufacturing, weaving, and distilling plants were established in the town, followed in the middle of the century by iron works, cider mills, cheese presses and printing shops. The commencement of cotton spinning at Pawtucket by Samuel Slater and Moses Brown in 1790, and the manufacture of jewelry by Nehemiah Dodge in 1796, inaugurated what were to be two of the leading industries in northern Rhode Island.

As the number and size of the industrial plants increased the complexion of the town began to change, particularly along the water fronts where factories and shops gradually replaced the former dwellings whose owners removed to the newly developed areas converted from farm lands (see map, page 56).

The most industrialized area was along the Moshassuck river, separating the Neck from the lands to the northwest, the waters of which were utilized for power. Located in the area between the present Smith Street and Schley Square were Oliver Bowen's tanyard and slaughter house, Henry Smith and Company's distill house and cooper shop, and Michael Metcalf's slaughter house.²¹ Jere B. Howell's grist mill was at the falls of the Moshassuck, near the site of the original town mill (page 7), and Robert Newell's chocolate and fulling mills were near the corner of Charles and Nichols streets. Amasa Gray's slaughter house and Aaron Mason's tanyard were on the Neck side of the river, near the present Printery Street, and Thurber's paper mill (established about 1780) was on the present Livingston Street, not far from North Burial Ground. Bordered by such industries there is small wonder that Moshassuck river became polluted in the early years of the town, a condition that was destined to prevail into the 20th century.

The water lots on the west side of the present North Main and South Main streets, from Smith Street southerly to Fox Point, were used mostly for maritime trades and were built up with wharves and warehouses, interspaced here and there by dwellings and industrial plants. Zachariah Allen operated a distillery and sugar house near the original spring lot on North Main Street. Joseph Congdon opened an iron shop near the present corner of North Main and Steeple streets, about 1790, inaugurating the business to which Congdon, Carpenter and Company succeeded in 1860. In the same neighborhood Ezekiel and William Burr operated a silversmith shop, Seril Dodge made shoe buckles, and Nehemiah Dodge manufactured gold rings, fancy jewelry and silverware. Clark and Nightingale owned a cooper shop and a blockmaker's shop at the present corner of South Main and Power streets as well as a distill house near the location of Point Street Bridge.

The waterfront at Tockwotton was developed, about 1790, by John Brown²² who erected shops and warehouses for the trade which he established with China and the East Indies, giving the spot the name India Point. Mr. Brown also maintained a distill house on the shore, a spermaceti works (started a half-century earlier by Obadiah Brown) near the present corner of India and Ives streets, and an air furnace at the present Tockwotton Park. Rope walks were established by Rebecca Williams, John Pitman, William Holroyd and others in the area now bounded by Hope, Wickenden, Governor and Williams streets.

Meanwhile, commerce and industry were securing a foothold along the waterfront south of Weybosset Point. Long Wharf, owned jointly by B. and E. Aborn, Nathan Angell,

21. The maps in Chace's *Owners and Occupants* establish the locations of these industries and others to follow.

22. "Daniel Abbott . . . laid out Tockwotton with the object of making that point the commercial center of the town, and bay, fifty years before John Brown was king of India Point." — Henry R. Chace ms. in Rhode Island Historical Society.

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Zephaniah Brown, Samuel Butler, Arnold Whipple, Simeon Aldrich, Amos Jenks and Stephen Harris, was located at the present Custom House Street (page 58). Stephen Harris' spermaceti works were on the shore, near the corner of Pine and Orange streets, Daniel Jackson's brass foundry (established 1762) was near the site of Narragansett Hotel on Weybosset Street, Augustus Winsor's slaughter house faced Potter's Ditch (Garnet Street), and John Innes Clark's distill house was located on Distill House Lane, now Page Street. Benjamin Tallman's shipyard was on the shore of Eddy's Point (near the junction of Dyer and Eddy streets).

The earliest industry on Woonasquatucket river was established about 1765 by David Rutenberg, a German immigrant, who erected a mill south of the present Atwells Avenue on Valley Street. Christopher Olney, who owned a 95-acre farm in that section and gave the name to Olneyville, established a grist mill and the Rising Sun Paper Mill, in the latter part of the century, on a wide section of the river north of the present Kossuth Street, then known as Olney's pond.

The Providence Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers was incorporated by the General Assembly in 1789 "for the purpose of promoting industry, and giving a just encouragement to ingenuity, that our own manufactures may be improved, to the general advantage not only of the manufacturers themselves, but of the state at large."²³ One of the first activities of the association was an agitation, led by John Howland, to institute a public school system²⁴ which culminated, in 1800, when the General Assembly passed an act for the establishment of free schools in every town. Thus was established "a great State triumph — not of long duration indeed, as the act was repealed in 1803 — but long enough to secure a permanent blessing to Providence."²⁵

Under the school act the Town Council was invested with the general oversight, supervision and government of the schools. It appointed a school committee of ten members with Jonathan Maxcy as chairman. Four district schools were opened in the fall of 1800; two were in existing buildings — Whipple Hall and the Brick Schoolhouse (page 43) — and the others were built that year, namely the South Schoolhouse on Transit Street and the West Schoolhouse at the corner of Friendship and Claverick streets.²⁶

The first financial institution of the town was the Providence Bank, organized by John and Moses Brown and opened October 10, 1791, following its incorporation by the General Assembly.²⁷ It was originally located on the south side of Governor Hopkins' Lane (Hopkins Street) and was moved in 1801 to the Joseph Brown house on South Main Street.²⁸ The Providence Insurance Company was founded in 1799 and the Providence Mutual Insurance Company in 1800, both having offices in the Exchange Coffee House (page 58). The Washington Insurance Company received a charter in 1800 and erected a building on Westminster Street in 1802 (page 72).²⁹

23. *R.I.C.R.*, X, 315.

24. A previous attempt had been made in 1767. See page 43.

25. Stone, pp. 138-143.

26. Staples, p. 510. Whipple Hall (1768) was replaced by the Benefit Street School in 1840 (page 103). The Brick Schoolhouse and Transit Street School were still standing in 1950, the former leased to the Crippled Children and Adults of R. I. (inc. 1946), and the latter owned by The Players and used as an appendage to Barker Playhouse (page 247). The West Schoolhouse is no longer standing.

27. *R.I.C.R.*, X, 458; *R.I.H.S.C.*, XXXIV, 113.

28. See page 50. The two-way entrance steps were removed and replaced by a doorway in the basement story.

29. *Charter of the Providence Washington Insurance Company* (Providence, 1887). The Providence and the Washington insurance companies were merged in 1812.

During the Colonial period architectural design had followed rather closely a contemporary English style, based upon the Italian Renaissance, which had been used by such architects as Jones, Wren, James Gibbs and Sir William Chambers. Although a change in style, influenced by Robert Adam's adaptation of Louis XVI motives for interior decoration, was evolved in England, about 1770, its effect was not noted in Providence before the early 19th century. It followed, therefore, that the buildings erected between the close of the war and 1800 closely resembled those of the Colonial period with an added richness of ornamentation and an emphasis on Classic precedent. During the years of the Early Republic a number of houses were built which were among the best ever produced in Providence.

The earliest of these dwellings, and in many respects the finest among the survivals, was erected by John Brown (illustration, page 65) in 1786 on an acre-and-a-half tract extending from Benefit Street to the present Brown Street, fronting on Power's Lane (now 52 Power Street). This project inaugurated a development of the lower part of the Neck that was to expand, in the next 20 years, to include a large part of the area bounded by Power, Brook, Wickenden and Benefit streets. Joseph Brown (page 57) designed the house and construction work was in charge of Zephaniah Andrews, the mason.

In his will made in 1802 John Brown described his house as "54 by 50 feet square, three stories high, with a deep cellar under the whole." The ell at the rear was not built until later and the kitchen and bathing facilities originally were located in outhouses. The plan conformed, in general, to that of contemporary houses of the central-hall type except that the chimneys were set in the exterior walls (see plan C, page 46), an arrangement which set a precedent for many later Providence dwellings. A distinctive feature of the facade, which followed English tradition but was new to Providence, is the slight projection in the center, crowned by a pediment. An open entrance porch is set in the projection, with brownstone columns crowned by a wooden entablature and a balustrade with twisted balusters, and over the porch is a Palladian or Venetian window. The walls have belt courses and are crowned by a fine cornice. The effect of dignity and repose which the outside gives repeats itself within the house. The stairway hall is very spacious and the doors opening to the rooms are finely treated with entablatures and broken-curved pediments with rich carving. The great mahogany staircase has twisted balusters, a beautiful scroll at the foot of the rail, an unusual wall scroll, and a curved string at the landing.³⁰ The house was officially opened with the marriage of John Brown's daughter Abby to John Francis, January 1, 1788. Its most distinguished visitor was President Washington on August 19, 1790. It became the property of the Rhode Island Historical Society, in 1941, by gift of John Nicholas Brown.

John Innes Clark and Colonel Joseph Nightingale, shipping partners, built houses on Benefit Street, the former at the northeast corner of John Street, in 1789, and the latter at the northeast corner of Williams Street, in 1791, both wood houses, three stories, with hipped roofs. President Washington "drank wine and punch" at Mr. Clark's August 19, 1790, and Senator William Smith, who accompanied the presidential party, recorded in his diary "I slept that night at Mr. Clark's, a merchant who lately has built a handsome house and is a man of prosperity . . . He treated me with much civility, having offered me a bed immediately on my arrival, though I had never seen him before."³¹ The house was

30. This description of the John Brown house is based upon an unpublished manuscript by Norman M. Isham.

31. Howard W. Preston, *Washington's Visits to Rhode Island* (Providence, 1932), p. 22.

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destroyed by fire a few years later. The Nightingale house (illustration, page 65), still standing at 357 Benefit Street, has a pedimented projection in the facade similar to that noted on the John Brown house. There are heavy beveled quoins at the corners and the windows, the latter having rusticated voussoirs and moulded cornices. The front porch is in the Roman Doric order with brownstone steps, and the entrance door has sidelights and a curved toplight. The interior is characterized by spaciousness and fine wood finish, and the chimneys are located in the partitions with two fireplaces in each chimney on each floor. Colonel Nightingale died a few years after erecting the house and it was purchased by John Carter Brown, nephew of John Brown, and has since remained in possession of his descendants.

Somewhat smaller are the wood two-story hipped roof houses of Captain George Benson (1796) and Edward Dexter (1799). The Benson lot is on the hilltop (now 64 Angell Street) and is a part of the original Weston home lot which was acquired by Thomas Angell in 1645 (see map, page 10). The Angell family continued its ownership until 1780 when they commenced the sale of tracts on Angell Street to Moses Brown and others for real estate development. The first house on Angell Street was erected in 1782 by Jonathan Congdon, for whom Congdon Street was later named. Captain Benson bought his lot from Moses Brown in 1792. The house plan conforms to the Colonial central-hall type (see plan B, page 46), and a distinguishing feature of its exterior is the Doric Entrance porch with its curved pediment. Edward Dexter built his house on George Street, south of the college,³² in spite of a warning by John Brown that "the Street too it will Ever be a whet Muddy Way, the Natural Springs being Such that Can not be Got Clear of Neither above nor below Ground."³³ The house was moved, in 1860, to 72 Waterman Street, its present location (illustration, page 66), where for many years it was the residence of Charles L. Pendleton; his collection of 18th century furniture and decorative arts was acquired subsequently by the Rhode Island School of Design.³⁴ The house has brick ends with outside chimneys set in the walls, and in the center of the facade is a Doric entrance porch with a modified Palladian window above it, all framed by full-length pilasters and a pediment. The interior has very fine wood finish.

The Colonial type of gable roof continued in use for most of the smaller wood houses of the period. Two of these were built on Angell's Lane (Thomas Street), opposite the First Baptist Meeting House, about 1789, and are still standing (illustration, page 66). Deacon Edward Taylor erected the 3½-story house at 9 Thomas Street and Seril Dodge the one adjoining at No. 10, the latter originally 2½-stories and later raised to provide for a shop in the ground floor. Both are of the two-chimney type³⁵ and have pedimented sidewalk entrances. Mr. Dodge built a 3-story house (11 Thomas Street) of brick veneer over wood construction about 1791 (later considerably altered) and sold his other house that year to Hope Brown (daughter of Nicholas) and her stepmother Avis Brown, and there Hope was married to Thomas Poynton Ives in 1792. Both Dodge houses are now the property of the Providence Art Club.³⁶

32. The original south line of the college property was about 125 feet north of George Street and was extended to that street by purchases of land between 1815 and 1860 (Edwin A. Burlingame, *Plats of Brown University and their History*, Providence, 1938). See also page 109.

33. From a letter written March 16, 1796, in possession of the R. I. Historical Society. Mr. Brown tried to persuade Mr. Dexter to build near India Point, an area he was interested in developing.

34. A unit of the Rhode Island School of Design, known as Pendleton House, was erected in 1908 to house the Pendleton collection. See page 207.

35. See plan B, page 46. The Dodge chimneys have been removed.

36. Consult George L. Miner, *Angell's Lane* (Providence, 1948).

1784 - 1800



R.I.H.S.

John Brown House, 1786, 52 Power Street, home of the Rhode Island Historical Society.



R.I.H.S.

Joseph Nightingale House, 1791, 357 Benefit Street.

THE NECK



R.I.H.S.

Edward Dexter House, 1799, 72 Waterman Street.



Houses on Thomas Street, 1789-1791.

1784 - 1800

Aside from the dwellings the most monumental work of the Early Republican period was the First Congregational Church (illustration below), erected by the Benevolent Congregational Society at the corner of Benefit and Benevolent streets in 1795 from the design of Caleb Ormsbee, the only 18th century Providence architect³⁷ of record beside Joseph Brown. The church was built of wood and its design was influenced by the west facade of Saint Paul's in London and Charles Bulfinch's recently completed (1788) Hollis Street Church in Boston. A Doric portico, flanked by twin towers, framed the facade. The building was destroyed by fire, in 1814, and was replaced by the present edifice (page 85).



R.I.H.S.

First Congregational Church, 1795-1814, corner of Benefit and Benevolent streets, from an engraving by William Hamlin.

The original Congregational Church, erected at the present corner of College and Benefit streets in 1723 (page 26), was sold to the town when the new meeting house was built, and was known thenceforth as the Town House (illustration, page 68). It provided

37. The word is used in its literal meaning "a person skilled in the art of building" (Webster) rather than in its professional sense. Brown was a scholar of scientific attainment as well as a man of taste and culture, and acquired his knowledge of architecture through the study of books on the subject. Ormsbee was a master builder, self-taught in the art of design.

THE NECK

quarters for the various public offices and departments, except the town clerk's office and council chamber which were continued in the Market House (page 50).

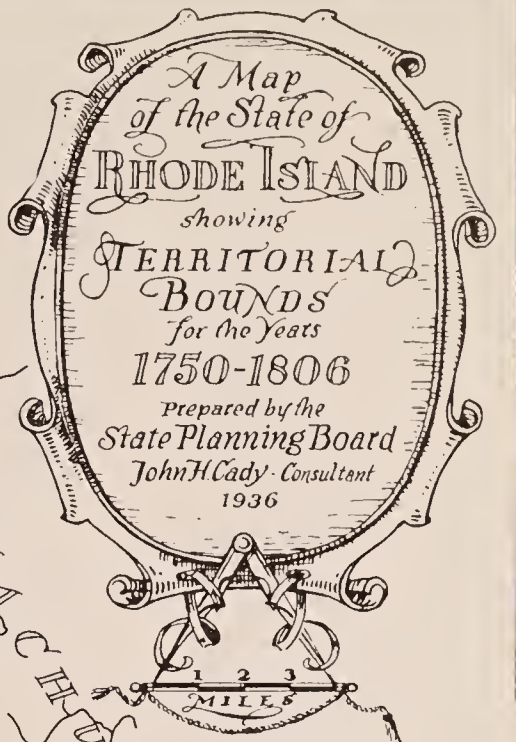
As the 18th century closed the Neck still dominated the town of Providence. Located within its territory were the state and municipal seats of government, the market, the principal financial institutions and industries, and most of the homes. The town was expanding westerly across the river, however, where already a significant development was under way (see map, page 70), and it was there, on Weybosset side, that a new civic and commercial center was to materialize in the next century.



R.I.H.S.

The Town House, 1795 – c. 1870, corner of Benefit and College streets, originally the Congregational Church (1723), from an oil painting by George W. Harris owned by Rhode Island Historical Society.

MASSACHUSETTS





A map of Providence by Daniel Anthony, 1803.

PART II

Weybosset Side

CHAPTER 7 1800 - 1812

THE section of Providence west of Great Salt river, upon which meadows and pasture land were allotted to the early settlers, was identified, in the 17th century, as Weybosset Side.¹ In contrast to the firm, well-defined beach bordering the Neck, the shores above and below Weybosset Point were swampy. Cove waters covered the present Exchange Place and Memorial Square and the shore of the river, below the point, followed the curve of Weybosset Street in distances ranging from 80 to 160 feet south of that highway. A creek, known as Muddy Dock, extended inland at Dorrance Street as far as Weybosset, and Waterman's Marsh covered a part of lower Westminster Street and the area northward to the cove.

Weybosset Side, up to the close of the 18th century, had not yet become of civic importance. Numerous streets and country roads had been laid out; distill houses, rope-walks, tanyards, paper mills, shipyards, slaughter houses, and other industries had been established; and a considerable number of houses had been erected. The only important public buildings standing in 1800, however, were a meeting house (page 35), a school house (page 62), and a theatre (page 60).

As the 19th century progressed it was on Weybosset Side that the development of Providence was focused. New lands were created out of water areas, a new civic center was established, and a railroad terminus was built. A series of bridges, constructed across the river, linked more closely the Weybosset lands with those of the Neck. The westward trend terminated the commercial importance of the Neck while the high lands of the latter, protected from a business invasion by the steep hillside, continued as a cultural, educational and residential area, known as the East Side. A prelude to the fall in prestige of the ancient Towne street was a fire on January 21, 1801, which started in a brick storehouse at the rear of John Corliss' house and destroyed the buildings on both sides of South Main Street for a distance 500 feet south of Planet Street.²

The drift of business toward Weybosset Side commenced with the establishment of a bank and an insurance office on Westminster Street. The Exchange Bank opened its office

1. *E.R.P.*, IV, 37.

2. *Providence Gazette*, Jan. 24, 1801. A total of 16 dwellings, 10 stores and 11 outhouses were burned, including the houses of Capt. Joseph Peck (formerly Hacker's Hall, page 37) and Ann Power (the Nicholas Power, 3d, mansion, page 29). "The dwelling of Mr. Corlis [still standing at 201 South Main Street] was several times on fire but was saved by persevering exertion."

WEYBOSSET SIDE

in a building at the corner of Exchange Street in 1801, where a permanent building was later erected (illustration, page 136) and the Washington Insurance Company built a three-story brick building in the following year at the corner of Washington Row. In 1802 the post office, which had been following the movement of the civic center from the environment of the Colony House to the Town Parade, was moved across the river to the Whitman house at Turks Head.³ A four-story brick building, part of which is still standing at the corner of Westminster and Dyer streets, was erected about 1813 to which the Union Bank (incorporated 1814) moved its offices a few years later (illustrations, pages 120, 189).

The earliest map of Providence, drawn from an actual survey, was the Daniel Anthony Map of 1803 (page 70). The built-up part of the Neck fringed its south and west shores,



R.I.H.S.

Providence Theatre Curtain, showing view of East Side, c. 1808.

including the area south of John Street and west of the sequence of Benefit Street and the present Carleton Davis Boulevard. On Weybosset Side, where tidewater covered a large part of the present business section, the bounds of the built-up area, from Providence river to the cove, followed approximately the lines of the present Elm, Chestnut and Friendship streets, Beacon Avenue, and Broad, Stewart, Westminster, Aborn and Fountain streets. Bridges spotted on the map include the Great Bridge at Market Square; Central (Red) and India (Washington) bridges over Seekonk river; Work House (Smith Street), Mill, Stevens and Randall bridges over Moshassuck river; and Tar Bridge over Woonasquatucket river at Olneyville.

3. William M. Bailey, "Turks Head and the Whitman Estate," *R.I.H.S.C.*, V, 216. See also page 40. During William Wilkinson's term as postmaster (1792-1802) the post office was located in the Coffee House on the Town Parade; in 1802 Dr. Benjamin West, his successor, moved the office to Jacob Whitman's house.

A second listing of street names was adopted by the Town Council in 1807,⁴ superseding the previous list of 1772 (page 47). On the Neck the sequence of Water, King, William's and Constitution streets (originally the Towne street) was re-christened Main Street. Certain early highways were identified by name, including Hope Street (originally the highway at the head of the lots, page 7), Angell Street (the way to the Upper Ferry, shown on map, page 14), and Harrington's Lane, originally Hearnden's Lane, now Rochambeau Avenue. Of the new streets listed Williams, James, Arnold and Sheldon were named for owners of land taken: Rebecca Williams, James Arnold and Christopher Sheldon. John Street was named for John Innes Clark whose house (page 63) stood at the corner of Benefit; and Benevolent Street was so called for the Benevolent Congregational Society



R.I.H.S.

Beneficent Congregational Church, 1809, Weybosset Street.
Lantern added 1835.

(page 67). On Weybosset Side the sequence of Weybosset, Broad and High streets, from Turks Head to the present Cathedral Square, was named Weybosset. School Street was re-named Mathewson in honor of James Mathewson, early land owner in the vicinity, and was extended north to the cove. Snow Street was changed to Pine, and a new Snow Street was designated at its present location. The westerly part of Ship Street was re-named Chestnut. New streets on the official listing included Friendship, Pleasant (Eddy, north of Weybosset), Eddy's (Eddy Street from Ship to Elm),⁵ Sugar Lane (Clemence, south of Westminster), Clemence (north of Westminster, called Cook's Lane on the Anthony map), Aborn, Washington (east of Aborn), Richmond (Weybosset to Ship), Field (Richmond,

4. *Town Council Proceedings*, VIII, 535. The list includes 76 names, about double the number recorded in 1772 (page 47).

5. The intervening part of Eddy Street was tide-flowed. See illustration, page 80.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

Ship to Elm), Potter (Garnet), Prime (Clifford), Smith (Broad Lane on the Anthony map), and Orms. The Meshanticut road (1717), known also as Monkeytown Road, was named Cranston Street and the road through the stated common (page 23) became Martin Street, now Chalkstone Avenue.

Certain streets not officially listed were named on the Anthony map, including Cat Alley (Middle Street), Stewart Street, the road to the Old Hospital (Elm and Hospital



R.I.H.S.

Cathedral of Saint John, 1811, North Main Street.

streets), the road to the New Hospital (Plain Street), Johnston Road (Westminster, west of Cranston Street), and Greenwich Road (Elmwood Avenue.)⁶

The Beneficent Congregational Church was erected on Weybosset Street in 1809, in

6. The old hospital was built in 1776 for smallpox patients and the new hospital in 1797 for yellow fever patients. Both were on or near the site of the present Rhode Island Hospital grounds (page 137).

replacement of the New Light Meeting House (page 26). James Wilson, an Irish immigrant, formerly a Dublin cabinetmaker, was pastor at the time and may have had a hand in the design. In contrast with the traditional steeple, the roof was crowned by a dome and belfry rising above an octagonal base, which gave the building the popular sobriquet "Round Top Church." The interior contained 150 pews on the ground floor and spacious galleries.⁷ Extensive alterations were made in 1836 (James C. Bucklin, architect) including interior remodeling and exterior refinements. The belfry was removed and in its place above the dome a lantern was erected in replica of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates at Athens. The Greek entrance portico may have been added at that time. The original brick veneering of the stone walls was bared in 1935 with the removal of many layers of paint and whitewash (illustration, page 73).

The Richmond Street Congregational Church (southeast corner of Pine), commenced by Joseph Snow, Jr. (page 35), and completed in 1807 under the pastorate of Thomas Wilkins, was a wood building with a tin-lined spire which gave it the popular name of "Old Tin Top." It was abandoned by the society upon erection of a new church on the opposite corner of Pine Street in 1827, and was used subsequently for various purposes, including religious meetings, a circus and a brewery,⁸ until its demolition about 1895. Another church, the Second Baptist, was built near Muddy Dock (southwest corner of Pine and Dorrance) in 1807 and destroyed in the storm of 1815 (page 81).⁹

Across the river on the Neck Saint John's Episcopal Church (now the Cathedral of Saint John) was erected at the corner of North Main and Church streets in 1810-11, following the demolition of the original King's Church (page 25), the name of which had been changed to Saint John's in 1794. The new church was the first monumental work of John Holden Greene,¹⁰ the outstanding architect of the early 19th century. The cornerstone was laid by the Reverend Nathan B. Crooker June 5, 1810¹¹ and the church was consecrated on Saint Barnabas Day, June 11, 1811 (illustration, page 74). The building originally measured 70 by 80 feet, its axis perpendicular to the hillside, with a vestibule, projecting from the front, containing stairways leading to the main floor and the galleries, and a chancel at the rear. The walls are Smithfield stone, laid in random courses with brown-stone trimmings, pierced by pointed windows with wood traceries. Above the vestibule is a clock tower, crowned by a square wooden belfry — a Gothic design modeled after the old Trinity Church in New York which burned during the Revolution, its details inspired by the works of Batty Langley.¹² In front of the vestibule is a semi-circular porch with columns, lintels, and a cornice with battlements. The transepts were added in 1867 and the interior has been substantially altered from time to time. The flat dome over the

7. Staples, p. 452; Arthur E. Wilson, *Paddy Wilson's Meeting House*, Boston, 1950, p. 149.

8. Staples, p. 455.

9. Greene, p. 144. The church was rebuilt on the same site, the name changed in 1831 to Pine Street Baptist Church. The title was again changed to Central Baptist in 1854 and a new building erected on the north side of Weybosset Street (page 127). The Masonic Temple was built on the Pine Street site in 1884, destroyed by fire March 19, 1896, and replaced by the present building the following year.

10. John Holden Greene was born in Warwick September 1, 1777, and became apprenticed, in 1794, to Caleb Ormsbee, builder-architect, who designed the First Congregational Church (page 67). Greene died September 5, 1850.

11. A copper plate records that the master builders were Smith and Asa Bosworth, stone layers, and John H. Greene, carpenter.

12. B. & T. Langley, *Gothic Architecture Improved by Rules and Proportions* (London, 1747).

WEYBOSSET SIDE

nave, supported by columns, is original.¹³ In the rear of the edifice is the old church yard where many of the early parishoners are buried.

The same type of Gothic design was adopted by Greene in the Sullivan Dorr house (illustration below), erected just prior to Saint John's Church. The site, at 109 Benefit Street, was a part of the original Roger Williams home lot, owned in 1798 by Zachariah Allen and inherited, in 1803, by his daughter Lydia who married Dorr the following year.¹⁴ The design of the house is supposed to have been suggested by Pope's villa at Twickenham. The main block, facing Bowen Street, has a center three-story section flanked by two-story



Photograph by John W. Auty

Sullivan Dorr house, 1809, 109 Benefit Street.

wings, all surmounted by parapet walls to conceal the flat roofs. The kitchen ell adjoins the east wing and beyond it, at right angles, are the stables and carriage house facing a service court. The elaborate cove-cornice, the entrance porch supported by clustered Gothic colonnettes, and the Palladian window over the porch, are of particular distinction. The interior is featured by a winding stairway in the semi-circular end of the central hall, and by wall decorations executed by Michele Felice Corné.¹⁵

Two houses were built farther south on the Neck, in the environment of the John Brown and Joseph Nightingale houses (pages 63, 65), completing a quartet of distinguished

13. This description of St. John's Church is based upon an unpublished manuscript on the works of John Holden Greene by Norman M. Isham.

14. Sullivan Dorr was father of Thomas W. Dorr whose activities led to the Dorr Rebellion of 1842 (page 113).

15. Antoinette F. Downing, "New Light on the Sullivan Dorr House," *R. I. Hist.*, XVI, 33. The Dorr house was given by its owner, Miss Margarethe L. Dwight, to the Providence Preservation Society in 1956.

1800 - 1812



R.I.H.S.

Thomas Poynton Ives house, 1806, 66 Power Street.



R.I.H.S.

Edward Carrington house, c. 1812, 66 Williams Street.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

mansions. The three-story brick house (illustration, page 77), erected by Thomas Poynton Ives¹⁶ on a two-acre estate at 66 Power Street in 1806, is similar in mass and general proportion to the Brown house. The cornice is enriched by carved modillions and is crowned by a balustrade. The entrance doorway, and the window above it, have elliptical fan lights, and the semi-circular entrance porch is in the Corinthian order, surmounted by a classic balustrade. The grounds include a paved court yard, entered from Brown Street, and various out-buildings. John Corliss, Jr. erected a two-story brick house at 66 Williams Street, about 1811, on land extending through to Power Street. This was purchased in 1812 by Edward



R.I.H.S.

Houses at 18-20 Arnold Street, c. 1800.

Carrington who remodeled it and added a third story and a double entrance porch composed of superimposed Corinthian orders (illustration, page 77). At the rear is a courtyard leading to the stables on Power Street. The property was given to the Rhode Island School of Design, in 1936, by Miss Dwight, great granddaughter of Mr. Carrington. The house is open to the public.

The small frame houses of the period followed Colonial precedent (page 30) rather closely both as to plan and methods of construction. Many of them have survived in Providence, with concentrated areas along Benefit, John, Arnold, Transit and other streets

16. Cady, "The Thomas P. Ives House," *R. I. Hist.*, XIV, 1. See also page 57.

of "Old Providence."¹⁷ Most typical are those with gable roofs. Their ornamental features are confined principally to the various types of classic doorways, the more distinguished having fluted pilasters capped by pedimented entablatures with leaded fan lights (illustration, page 78).

While the gambrel roof had become rather obsolete on the Neck, a house of that type was built on Weybosset Street by Samuel Aborn about 1810 (illustration below). It became the Teutonia House in 1877 and was replaced, in 1891, by the Hodges Building, the first floor of which was tenanted, a few years later, by the Manufacturers Outlet



R.I.H.S.

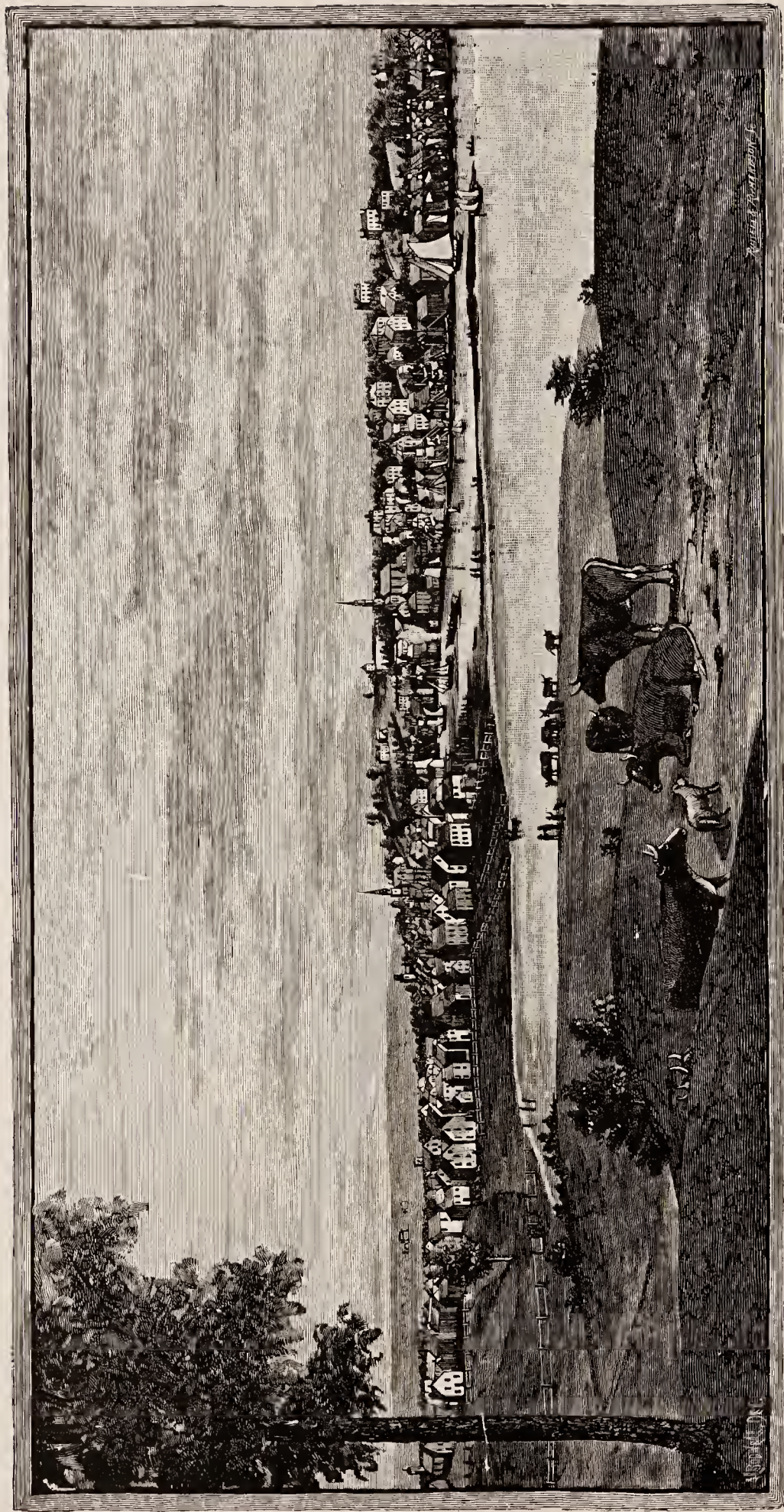
Samuel Aborn house, c. 1810-c. 1890, Weybosset Street.

Company which subsequently expanded to occupy the whole block bounded by Weybosset, Eddy, Pine and Garnet streets.

A brick schoolhouse was built by Brown University at the head of College Hill, in 1810, to accommodate a Latin School which had been an appendage of the college, intermittently, since 1764. College supervision ended about 1852 and it afterwards became a private school for boys, known as University Grammar School. The building was torn down in 1900 and the Administration Building of the University (now known as Van Wickle Hall) was erected on its site.¹⁸

17. The area included in the original proprietors' lots (see map, page 10). A Map of Old Providence, spotting the locations of surviving buildings erected before 1830, was published in 1956 by the Providence Preservation Society.

18. Bronson, p. 58. See also page 205.



R.I.H.S.

View of Providence from the south, c. 1819, from an engraving by A. L. Boswell.

CHAPTER 8 1812 - 1822

IN 1812 the United States was again at war with Great Britain as a result of commercial difficulties between the two nations. The blockading of European ports, during the Napoleonic wars, had been followed by an Embargo act, passed by the Congress December 22, 1809, forbidding the departure of any vessel from the United States to a foreign country. The embargo, instituted by President Thomas Jefferson, had crippled foreign commerce and had inflicted hardships on the merchants of Providence and other maritime cities who formally protested the act. The declaration of war June 10, 1812, was signalized by the tolling of bells and the raising of flags half mast, yet the citizens pledged their support to the laws of the nation and rose to its defense. In the course of the war Rhode Island's naval reputation was maintained by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, a native of South Kingstown. Summoned to organize a fleet on Lake Erie, he proceeded there from Newport with officers, seamen and ship carpenters, built four small vessels, assembled five others and, on September 10, 1813, captured a British squadron, by which act the United States acquired control of the Great Lakes.¹

Foreign trade was resumed after the War of 1812 but never quite regained its former activity. Providence merchants had begun to sell their ships and to invest their capital in mills and, with the decline in ocean commerce, an industrial era was under way in which the inland waterways of the state were appropriated as sites for manufacturing plants. By 1812 over 30 cotton mills had been put in operation, within a radius of ten miles of Providence, in the Moshassuck, Woonasquatucket and Pawtuxet valleys, and a woolen mill was established on Moshassuck river, in Providence, for the manufacture of broadcloth.²

On September 23, 1815, occurred the "great storm" (illustration, page 82), with a southeast gale of extreme violence blowing from 9 o'clock in the morning until noon, accompanied by a tide which rose to a height of 11 feet 9½ inches above mean high water.³ Extensive damage was caused by the combination of wind and tide; Weybosset and India bridges were carried away; Central Bridge⁴ was partly demolished; most of the buildings standing on the wharves were destroyed; the third story of the Washington Insurance Building was damaged by the bowsprit of the ship *Ganges*; the Second Baptist Meeting House was demolished (page 75); and many houses and barns were blown down. Nearly every vessel in the harbor was driven from its mooring; some were lodged on wharves, others were carried through Weybosset Bridge into the cove, and one sloop was blown across Weybosset Street and came to rest on Pleasant (Eddy) Street.⁵

1. Field, I, 618.

2. Field, III, 360. The mill was established by Sullivan Dorr, Samuel G. Arnold, Joseph S. Martin, Daniel Lyman, and E. K. Randolph under the name of the Providence Woolen Manufacturing Company. A large stone building was erected between Branch Avenue and the river, south of North Burial Ground, later the site of Allen Print Works (page 171).

3. In the hurricane of September 21, 1938, the tide rose two feet higher. See page 270.

4. India and Central toll bridges spanning Seekonk river (page 58) had previously been damaged by a freshet, in 1807, involving extensive repairs.

5. *Providence Gazette*, Sept. 30, 1815.

WEYBOSSET SIDE



R.I.H.S.

The great storm of Providence, September 23, 1815, from Fleetwood engraving in Rhode Island Historical Society.



Courtesy of *The Providence Journal*

Exchange Place during the hurricane of September 21, 1938.

Prior to the storm little change had been effected in the natural shore line of the river and cove above Fox Point. River walls had been built in 1792, upon which Weybosset Bridge abutted, extending on the east bank from the present Steeple Street to a point south of Market Square, and on the west bank from the southwest corner of the present Washington Row to Post Office Court (page 58).

Harbor lines were established in town meeting July 24, 1815, a few weeks before the storm, and were ratified by the General Assembly November 3 of that year.⁶ The lines started at Weybosset Bridge, where the channel was about 115 feet wide, and diverged as they extended southward, the east line running parallel with the shore of the Neck, already bordered by wharves, to Fox Point, and the west line traversing waters and marsh land on Weybosset side to Eddy's Point, near the foot of Ship Street. The defining of the shipping channel was of particular significance as it predetermined the pattern of docks and slips on the west side of the river (see map, page 90) and, by establishing the head of navigation at Weybosset Bridge, initiated a movement for the eventual filling of the cove waters.

After the wreckage from the great storm had been cleared away attention was given to the rebuilding of the bridges. The new Weybosset Bridge (the seventh at that location) was a fixed span, completed in July, 1816.⁷ Its length was 120 feet, the same as its predecessor (page 58); its overall width was 95 feet, including a 22-foot sidewalk on each side; and it was "firmly supported by 65 posts driven into the bed of the river."⁸ A new covered lattice bridge was erected at India Point, 250 feet long and supported by five stone piers, with an uncovered draw 93 feet long and 24 feet wide.⁹ Repairs were made to Central Bridge.

South Water Street, a waterfront highway 30 feet wide, was laid out parallel with the new east harbor line, from Market Square to Fox Point, by order of the Town Council June 2, 1817¹⁰ following a petition from owners of waterfront property who agreed that if the town would lay out the street, the land between it and the river should remain open forever, with no permanent building erected thereon. That provision for safeguarding the development of the shore property, unfortunately, was set aside by a court decision in 1844,¹¹ the effect of which was to permit the later erection, from time to time, of ill-assorted and unattractive waterfront buildings, mostly of wood construction, between Crawford Street and Fox Point.¹²

6. C.E., *Plan showing river lines and street lines between Crawford Street Bridge and Weybosset Bridge*, No. 040215, July 15, 1914.

7. Pending its completion a temporary bridge was erected (*Providence Gazette*, Oct. 21, 1815).

8. *Providence Gazette*, July 27, 1816.

9. C.E. *Report*, 1872-73, p. 32.

10. *Providence Gazette*, August 2, 1817. "We understand that this street, which will be an important improvement to the town, and is calculated to run south from the east end of the Great Bridge to the new stores of Gen. Carrington, has been lately laid out, and the intermediate docks are to be filled up as fast as practicable."

11. C.D. No. 5, 1866-67. Opinion of the City Solicitor [John P. Knowles] upon the right to erect buildings upon the wharves, quoting the *Providence Journal* of Oct. 6, 1845: "Upon the death of Christopher Arnold, one of the signers of the agreement and the owner of a house and wharf on the present Sovereign Street his estate was purchased by W. Coleman and Sons who, claiming to own the wharf, erected a building thereon for a blacksmith shop in 1844. They were indicted but were not convicted as the court refused to permit the record of the laying out of South Water Street, or the agreement relative thereto, to go to the jury, and no other evidence was offered. The result of the decision permitted the subsequent erection of a number of warehouses and other buildings on the waterfront."

12. The area degenerated after the wharves became abandoned by the steamboat companies in the 20th century. A rehabilitation program was under way in 1955.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

The system of 17th and 18th century roads, radiating from the town of Providence, was extended and improved in the first quarter of the 19th century by the establishment of turnpikes, built and maintained by private corporations and operated for revenue derived from the collection of tolls. Many turnpike companies were chartered in the New England states with privileges, in some cases, of acquiring land for the construction of new roads and, in others, of obtaining jurisdiction over existing roads. Rates were established by the states, payable at toll houses, for various types of vehicles and various kinds of animals, with exemptions made for persons using the turnpikes for the purpose of attending public worship, funerals and town meetings. Provision was made for freeing each road when the amount of the original investment, in addition to 12 percent, should have been repaid.¹³ Turnpikes running out of Providence (see map, page 118) were as follows:

The *Pawtuxet Turnpike* (1825) was the origin of the present Eddy Street from Point Street southerly to the Pawtuxet road (Broad Street). The section between Point and Crary streets was on filled land (page 73), south of which the turnpike intersected town-owned land on which two hospitals were standing — the old Small Pox Hospital on the water side (later the City Wood Yard), and the Marine Hospital on the present Rhode Island Hospital grounds. At the town line, near the present Public Street, the turnpike entered the town of Cranston.

The *New London Turnpike* (1816) followed the Greenwich road (Elmwood and Reservoir avenues) in Cranston (page 28), starting at the town line (Parkis Avenue) and continuing through the towns of Warwick, Coventry, West Greenwich, Exeter, Richmond, Hopkinton, and Westerly into Connecticut.

The *Norwich and Hartford turnpikes* (1803) started from the Providence-Johnston line (Olneyville Square). The former followed the Plainfield road (see map, page 27), continuing along the Johnston-Cranston boundary and through Scituate, Foster, and Coventry into Connecticut; and the latter was constructed on the lines of the present Hartford Avenue and was extended through Johnston, Scituate, and Foster to Killingly, Connecticut.

The *Woonasquatucket Turnpike* (1810) was a continuation of "a four-rod road" (Atwells Avenue), laid out by the Town Council in 1809 from Aborn Street to the North Providence line at Woonasquatucket river. It ran through North Providence over Atwells Avenue, terminating at Manton Avenue.

The *Powder Mill Turnpike* (1815), named for a Revolutionary powder mill in North Providence, started at the Providence-North Providence line (near Holden Street) in extension of Broad Lane (Smith Street) and followed the present Smith Street and Putnam Avenue to Greenville where it connected with the *Glocester* (1804) and *West Glocester* (1794) turnpikes which continued to the Connecticut line.

The *Douglas Turnpike* (1807) ran northwesterly through North Providence on the lines of the present Douglas Avenue, from the town line near Orms Street, and continued in a nearly straight line through Smithfield, North Smithfield, and Burrillville into Massachusetts. A *Branch* of that turnpike, now Branch Avenue, followed the lines of the Wanskuck road (page 23) easterly to Moshassuck river.

The *Louisquisset Turnpike* (1805) started from Charles Street at the Providence-North Providence line near West River Street and followed Charles Street and the old Louisquisset road (page 15) through North Providence and Lincoln to the village of Limerock.

13. Frederick J. Wood, *The Turnpikes of New England* (Boston, 1919).

The *Smithfield Turnpike* (1823) followed the old highway (Smithfield Avenue), stated in 1683, from the *Branch Turnpike* through North Providence to Saylesville in Lincoln.

The *Pawtucket Turnpike* (1807) started at the Providence-North Providence line (Cemetery Street) on the east side of the old Pawtucket road (page 15) and ran to Pawtucket falls. Both the old road and the turnpike are incorporated in the present North Main Street.

The *East Turnpike* (1825) was built in extension of Hope Street, north of Olney Street, and followed the present Hope Street and East Avenue into Pawtucket.

The *Taunton Turnpike* (1825), chartered in Massachusetts, started at the easterly end of India Bridge in Rehoboth (now East Providence) and followed the present Taunton Avenue to Taunton, Massachusetts. The approach to the bridge from Providence was over Hope and India streets.

The first steamboat in Narragansett bay, after the brief career of Captain Ormsbee's *Experiment* in 1792 (page 57), was the *Firefly* which made trips between Carrington's Wharf¹⁴ and Newport in 1817. President James Monroe was a passenger when he visited Providence on June 30.¹⁵ Regular sailings to New York commenced two years later in the *Fulton* and in 1822 the Rhode Island and New York Steamboat Company was organized with two boats making semi-weekly trips with stops at Newport. In 1827 Richard Borden of Fall River organized a steamboat line, under ownership of the Fall River Iron Works Company, between that town and Providence. Coastwise trade had been maintained, since 1800, by lines of packets¹⁶ transporting both passengers and freight. In 1825 lines were running from Providence to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Albany, Hartford, and Boston as well as local lines in Narragansett bay to Newport, Bristol, Fall River, East Greenwich, and Wickford.¹⁷

Overland transportation was provided by stage coaches which made daily runs over the turnpikes to Boston, Worcester, Hartford, Taunton, New Bedford, and New York. In some cases they were operated in connection with the packets as, for example, a line from New York to Boston which went by water to Providence and thence overland to Boston.¹⁸ In 1829, during a part of the summer, 323 stages were operating weekly to and from Providence, exclusive of purely local lines.¹⁹

The First Congregational Meeting House, erected in 1794, was destroyed by fire June 14, 1814²⁰ and, pending its replacement by a new building, church services were held in the original edifice (page 26) that had been sold to the town 20 years previously.

The new First Congregational Church, designed by John Holden Greene, was built on the site of the burned meeting house. The cornerstone was laid May 29, 1815 and the church was dedicated October 31, 1816.²¹ It is rectangular in plan, with a wide front vestibule containing stairs to the main floor and the gallery. The forebuilding is treated as a portico with Doric columns set close to the wall, resting on pedestals, and the entablature is broken by a great arched window with Gothic tracery. A stone clock tower stands above the roof

14. Located at the foot of Transit Street.

15. Greene, p. 74.

16. The earliest packets were sloops and small schooners, succeeded after 1820 by steamboats.

17. Field, II, 506.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Charles H. Dow, *History of Steam Navigation between New York and Providence* (New York, 1877), p. 10.

20. *Providence Gazette*, June 18, 1814.

21. From the records of the First Congregational Society. The name was changed to First Unitarian Society in 1953.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

of the vestibule from which an octagonal steeple rises 200 feet above the ground (illustration below). The main walls of the church are granite with Gothic windows. In the interior the ceiling is in the form of a dome supported, together with the galleries, by four Corinthian fluted columns.

Three churches were erected in 1822, namely, the First Methodist at the corner of



R.I.H.S.

First Congregational Church, 1815, corner of Benefit and Benevolent streets.

Clifford and Chestnut streets, the Third Baptist on Tockwotton Plain (the present corner of Wickenden and Hope streets), and the Fourth Baptist at 20 Howell Street (C. P. Hartshorn, architect). The congregations of these churches were merged with others and only the latter building was standing in 1950, for some years known as Ahavth-Sholem Synagogue.

Friends School²² was opened, in 1819, in a building designed by John Holden Greene,

22. Established in Portsmouth, in 1784, as the New England Yearly Meeting Boarding School.

located on a 43-acre tract of land extending from Hope Street to Featherbed Lane (Arlington Avenue) which had been donated by Moses Brown to the Society of Friends in 1814.²³ The school house was built of brick and consisted of a center building, 3½-stories high, flanked by two 2½-story wings, with a basement under the whole. A small Doric entrance vestibule, reached by a high flight of granite steps, led to the center building and an octagonal spire rose from its gable roof. The building was greatly enlarged and altered in later years, new buildings were erected on the grounds, and the name was changed, in 1904, to Moses Brown School.

Brown University acquired in 1822 a parcel of land directly north of the original tract (page 43), extending along the present Waterman Street from Prospect to Brown. On that site the university's second academic building was erected with funds given by Nicholas Brown, Jr., and was named Hope College after the sister of the donor.²⁴ It has brick walls, four-stories high, rising from a granite base, and the center of each facade has a slight projection with a pedimented top. Certain changes in technique from the Colonial traditions of the original College Edifice are noted, including the elliptical toplights, with granite trimmings, over the entrances, and granite window lintels (see illustration, page 88).

In 1820 the *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal* was founded as a semi-weekly newspaper, to be succeeded by the *Providence Daily Journal* whose first issue appeared July 21, 1829, with a printing office located in the Coffee House (page 58) on Market Square. Publication of the *Providence Gazette*²⁵ was discontinued in 1825, when it was consolidated with the *Rhode Island American* (established 1808), and the latter newspaper was continued, under various names, until 1854.

The use of the public highways by pedestrians at night time was somewhat hazardous and "it was not uncommon to meet persons in the evening, wending their way through the streets, over the uneven sidewalks, making sure of their steps by the flickering light of hand lanterns."²⁶ Accordingly, public safety measures were taken by the Town Council in directing the erection of oil lamps on the principal streets, in 1820, and by appointing a committee on sidewalks, two years later, for the purpose of "making the rough places smooth and the crooked straight in the foot-ways of the town." Its initial project was on South Main Street, where flagstone sidewalks were laid, replacing the cobble stones which previously had extended across the street from house to house.²⁷

In 1822 the Town Council appointed Zachariah Allen and Elisha Dyer a committee to procure up-to-date fire fighting apparatus,²⁸ with the result that a suction engine was purchased, together with 1000 feet of hose. The engine was named Hydraulion No. 1, was manned by a volunteer company of the same name, and was housed in a wood building, with a tower, erected at the present northwest corner of Exchange Place and Exchange Street.

23. R. W. Kelsey, *History of Moses Brown School* (Providence, 1919).

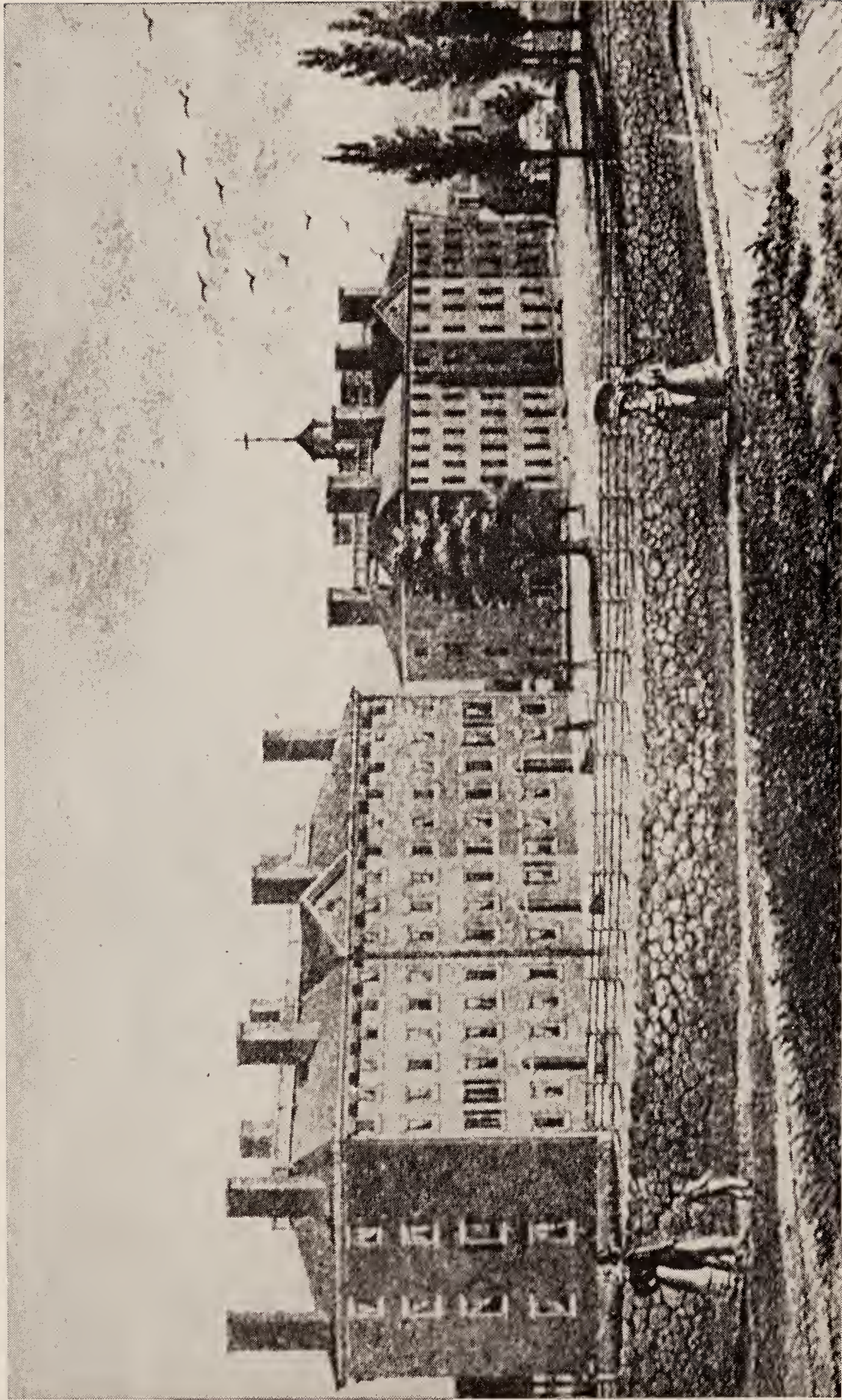
24. Bronson, p. 172. Mrs. Hope Ives, wife of Thomas P. Ives, was Mr. Brown's only surviving sister.

25. See page 41. John Carter retired as editor and publisher of the *Gazette* shortly before his death in 1814 and was succeeded by William Wilkinson. The office had been moved from Shakespeare's Head to the Coffee House in 1793.

26. Staples, p. 386.

27. Greene, p. 74.

28. *Ibid*, p. 122. Volunteer fire fighting was organized in 1759 by the appointment of fire wards (see pp. 36, 60). A hook and ladder company was organized in 1820.



Courtesy of the *Brown Alumni Monthly*

Hope College (1822) and University Hall (1770), from a drawing by James Kidder, c. 1828.

CHAPTER 9 1822 - 1832

A SECOND map of Providence by Daniel Anthony (page 90), bearing the date 1823, shows a substantial expansion in the highway pattern. The southern part of the Neck was developed as far as Hope Street on the east and George Street on the north. On Weybosset side the built-up area extended southerly to Point Street, westerly to Tan Yard Lane (Dean Street), northerly to Fountain Street, and northwesterly along Atwells Avenue, Federal Street, and Abbott (Aborn) Street toward the cove.

The publication of this "new, elegant and accurate map of the town" and the activities of a committee, headed by Edward R. Young, in "numbering the houses in the most important streets and procuring signs for such streets as required them" provided incentives for the publication in 1824 of the first Providence Directory. This was undertaken by Brown and Danforth at their printing office, "3 South Main-street," and contained "the names of the inhabitants, their occupations, places of business, and dwelling houses, with lists of the streets, lanes, wharves, &c, also banks, insurance offices, and other public institutions, the whole carefully collected and arranged."¹ The directory listed 2,958 persons² and the highways, in addition to 117 "streets" and five "alleys," included Market Square, Westminster (Washington) Row, Atwells Avenue and Cheapside. The latter was a name given to a shopping center on the west side of North Main Street, north of Market Square (illustration, page 91). It was there that Watson and Gladding began its career at the "Sign of the Bunch of Grapes" in 1805, succeeded by B. H. Gladding Company, now located at 291 Westminster Street.

The erection of three important buildings on Market Square in 1823-24, all designed by John Holden Greene, gave the former Town Parade a distinctly metropolitan aspect. Charles Potter acquired the former Ephraim Bowen lot (page 48) at the northeast corner of College Street and built a hotel known as Franklin House (illustrations, pages 120, 180). The facade facing the square was composed of a stone basement with brick walls rising four stories above it, crowned by a gable with raised wall between the end chimneys and a lunette window in the center. The entrance was in the center of the basement, with stores on either side, and a stone stairway led from the entrance hall to the main floor of the hotel, which was entered also at grade from a 20-foot gangway leading from College Hill to a courtyard at the east end of the building. Mr. Potter also acquired the Pardon Bowen house, adjacent on the hillside, and connected it with the hotel by means of a two-story unit carried across the gangway on large wooden lintels. Franklin House was considerably altered and made a part of the Helen Rowe Metcalf Building of the Rhode Island School of Design in 1936 (page 257). The lot facing Market Square north of Franklin House, where the Joseph Jenckes house (page 48) stood, was purchased by the Roger Williams Bank (incorporated 1803) which erected a five-story business building there in 1824 (illustrations,

1. The directory was re-printed by Sampson, Murdock and Company in connection with the 250th anniversary observance of the settlement of Providence, in 1886.

2. The names were confined to white males over 21 and white females who were heads of families. The estimated population of Providence in 1824, according to the directory, was 15,000, including about 1,400 colored persons.

pages 92, 180). Its facade was composed of windows, separated by granite piers, and was crowned by a parapet with a rectangular sculptured panel. This building was fabricated in skeleton construction, with a frame of heavy timbers bolted to the granite facing, in much the same technique as modern steel construction. It was demolished in 1912 and replaced by the People's Savings Bank (page 228). On the north side of Market Square a four-story business building, later known as Granite Block (illustrations, pages 91, 92), was erected in three units, separated by party walls, somewhat similar in exterior treatment



R.I.H.S.

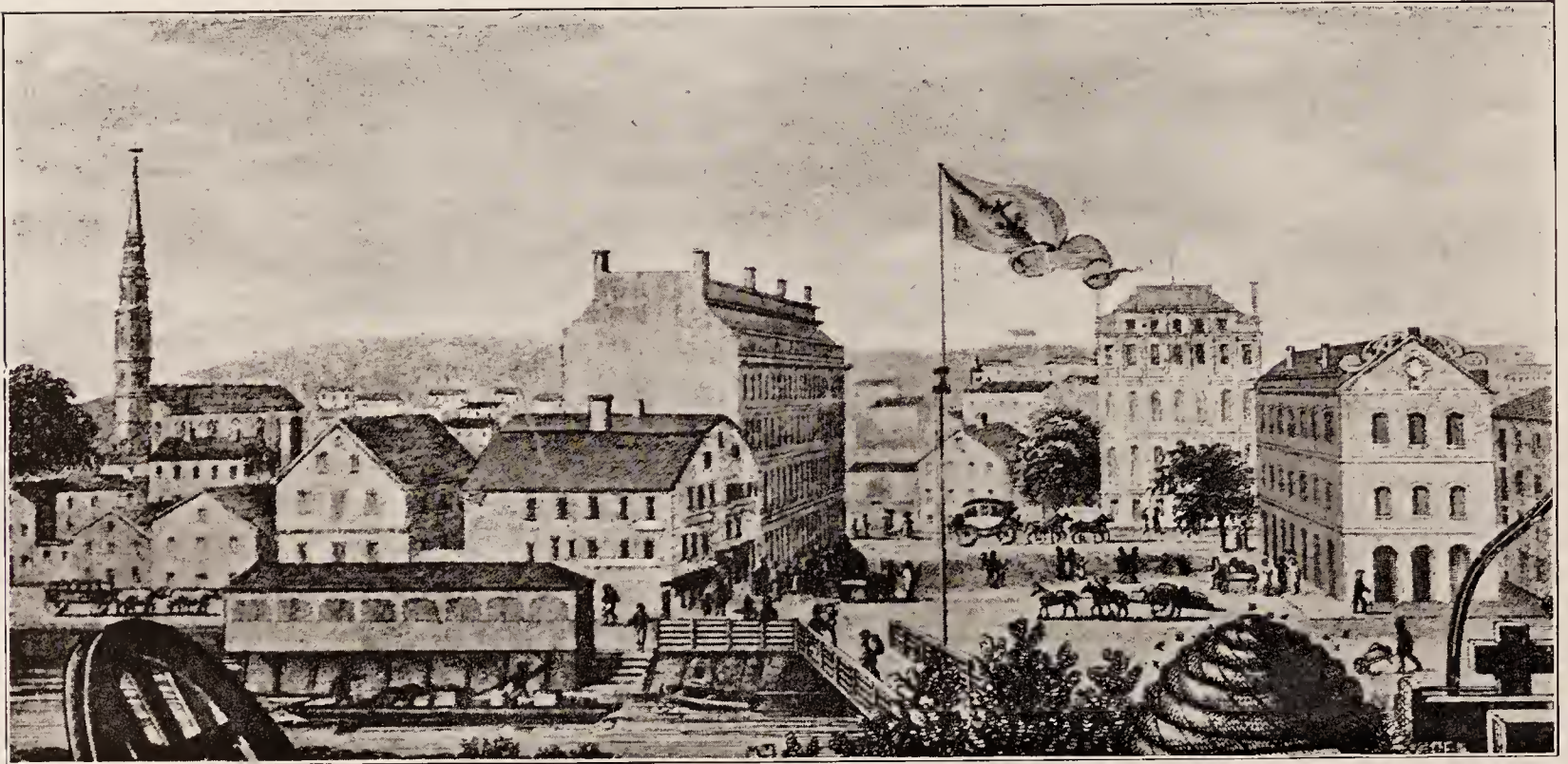
Cheapside, from painting by George W. Harris, 1843. Granite Block (1823) at left.

and method of construction to the Roger Williams Bank Building. The western part, abutting the Coffee House (page 58), was owned by John Larchar, the next by Potter and Russell, and the eastern unit, at the corner of Cheapside, by Holden, Wood and Butts. The building was razed in 1939 and replaced by the School of Design Auditorium (page 265).

In 1824 the town of Providence inherited, by will of Ebenezer Knight Dexter, the greater part of his property, estimated at a value of \$60,000, to be applied to the support of the poor.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

Administration of the bequest, which included two farms, one on Hope Street and the other on Cranston Street, was entrusted to the Commissioners of Dexter Donation.³ Dexter Asylum, a three-story stone building, designed by John Holden Greene, was erected in 1830 on the 38-acre Hope Street estate. It was composed of a center section, crowned by a gable roof and cupola, and flanking wings. Alterations made in 1870 provided additional stories but changed the Classic design to that of the French Empire. The asylum grounds, encircled by a mile-long stone wall, were still maintained in the heart of the East Side residential district in 1957.⁴ The Cranston Street property, comprising about ten acres, was conveyed to the town for purposes of a training field for militia.



R.I.H.S.

A view of Market Square c. 1823, from engraving of membership certificate in the Providence Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers, by Annin & Smith.

The highway system on the swamp land west of Providence river followed a different pattern from that on the opposite shore (page 83). Dyer Street⁵ was laid out in 1825 starting at the slip south of Long Wharf (Custom House Street) and extending southerly to intersect Eddy Street south of Ship Street (see map, page 93). Three gangways running southeasterly from Weybosset Street, platted by the Proprietors in 1717 (page 24), were extended to Dyer Street and identified, respectively, as Butler's (Hay Street), Peck's (Peck Street), and Lippitt's (Orange Street). Docks were built opposite the gangways from Dyer Street to the Harbor line. Muddy Dock (page 35) was filled and Dorrance Street⁶ was built from

3. Staples, pp. 390–392. In accordance with the bequest Dexter Town Meetings are held annually, on the third Saturday in December, to vote upon its administration.

4. In that year the sale of Dexter Asylum was under consideration by the city.

5. *P.B.*, I, 47. Originally identified as the "New Street."

6. Daniel Anthony, *Map of Muddy Dock Street*, July 8, 1812; Benoni Lockwood, *Plat of Dorrance Street Association Lands*, October 24, 1827.





A view of the cove from Smith's Hill, 1827, from an engraving by J. P. Murphy.

R.I.H.S.

the river to Weybosset Street. Central Wharf was constructed, extending southeasterly from Dyer Street to the harbor line, and a brick store house was built upon the wharf (see map, page 93) which survived until the 1940's.

The docks and slips east of Dyer Street served a useful purpose for nearly 100 years. With the gradual abandonment of steamboats in the upper harbor during the present century, however, those water front areas, like the ones on the opposite shore (page 84), became obsolete and eventually were used for automobile parking.⁷

Although the cove had been closed to sea-going vessels by the erection of a fixed bridge in 1816 (page 83) its use for shipping was revived, temporarily, upon construction of Blackstone Canal from Providence to Worcester, Massachusetts, a project intended to provide better means of transportation between the two towns and to stimulate the development of the villages along Moshassuck and Blackstone rivers. The Blackstone Canal Company, incorporated by the Rhode Island General Assembly in the June session, 1823, was authorized "to locate, construct and fully complete a navigable canal, with locks, tow paths, basins, dams, wharves, embankments, toll houses, and other necessary appendages" from the cove to the Massachusetts line. A Massachusetts corporation was given similar authority in that commonwealth. Organization was effected in May, 1825, subscriptions to stock were filled, and work was commenced under the auspices of a board of commissioners consisting of Edward Carrington, Stephen H. Smith and Moses B. Ives.⁸

While construction of the canal was under way various public improvements were made in the vicinity of the cove (see map, page 93). Canal Street (page 58) was extended from Steeple Street to Smith Street in 1825,⁹ 40 feet wide with a retaining wall built along the east shore of the cove, and Cove Street was constructed on what is now the south roadway of Exchange Place. Two bridges were built by the Providence Washington Insurance Company (page 62), 1827-29, under authority of the town; one was located north of and parallel to Weybosset Bridge, extending Cove Street easterly to Canal Street, and the other was erected over the west bank of the river, connecting the Cove Street Bridge with Weybosset Bridge and coinciding with the present Washington Row. A public fish market, established in 1819 in a wood building north of Weybosset Bridge on Canal Street (illustration, page 92) was moved to a point just north of Cove Street Bridge in 1828.¹⁰

A causeway, with a roadway and bridge, was built from Canal Street, opposite the jail¹¹ (Haymarket Street) northwesterly across the cove to its north shore, terminating at a point near the present Gaspee Street (see map, page 93). The waters above the causeway were appropriated by the Blackstone Canal Company for a boat basin, and a tidal lock was built adjacent to Canal Street at the eastern end of the causeway.¹² The first of 49 canal locks was erected in Moshassuck river, a short distance north of Mill Bridge, near the site of the falls where the first town mill was established in 1646 (page 7). The tow path was on the east bank, passing under the Smith Street and Mill bridges. The canal followed Moshassuck valley as far as Scott's pond in Lincoln and continued to Worcester along Blackstone valley. It was opened July 1, 1828, when the packet *Lady Carrington*,

7. Plans for re-developing the area were under way in 1956.

8. *Report of Blackstone Canal Company*, May 7, 1828.

9. *C.C. Records*, 11, 299.

10. Greene, p. 74.

11. The County Jail was erected in 1799 in replacement of its predecessor of 1753. See page 35.

12. *Report of Blackstone Canal Company*, May 7, 1828; *Map of the Blackstone Canal and its Appendages as constructed in the year 1828*, compiled from actual surveys by Ed. E. Phelps, Resident Engineer, owned by the Lonsdale Company; *Record Book No. 1*, p. 89.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

drawn by two horses from the boat landing on Canal Street, made the trip to Worcester, returning the day following.¹³ The canal was used for about 20 years and was abandoned soon after the inauguration of the Providence and Worcester Railroad in 1847 (page 115).

A brick market house, later identified as Canal Market, was erected in 1826 at the corner of North Main and Mill streets, as a private venture. The basement was occupied



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Whitman Block, 1825-1912, Turks Head

by stores, the main floor by the market, the second floor by the Merchants and Mechanics Bank (incorporated 1827) and the top floor by a large hall, used occasionally for public meetings.¹⁴ In the following year another brick market house, two stories high, was built at the junction of Broad (Weybosset) and Pawtuxet (Broad) streets. For many years that highway intersection was known as New Market Place. Neither of these markets survives.

13. Field, II, 498.

14. Staples, p. 375.

1822 - 1832

By the year 1827 Westminster Street had become closely built up on both sides as far west as Aborn Street¹⁵ with wood houses predominating, interspaced here and there by more substantial brick buildings. The largest structure was Whitman Block (illustration, page 96), a three-story brick building, erected at Turks Head in 1825 on the site of the former Jacob Whitman house (page 40), a part of which stood until replaced by the Turks Head Building in 1913 (page 227). Nearly opposite, at the northeast corner of Westminster and Exchange streets, stood the Hamilton Building (illustration, page 136), a brick three-story business block erected about 1824 which survived until 1870. The Washington Insurance Building (page 62) was at the corner of Washington Row. Farther west, at the corner of Union



From an anonymous photograph

Benjamin Hoppin house, 1816 - c. 1875, corner of Westminster and Aborn streets.

Street, was the First Universalist Church, erected in 1825 on the site of its predecessor (1822) which had been destroyed by fire May 24, 1825. The church, designed by John Holden Greene, was brick and a steeple rose from its roof; it was demolished in 1872 and the site is now a part of the Boston Store.¹⁶ The Providence Theatre (page 60) was at the corner of Mathewson Street where Grace Church stands. The most distinguished dwelling on Westminster Street was built by Benjamin Hoppin in 1816 (illustration above) at the corner of Snow Street, designed by Greene with three-story brick walls and a low hipped roof and deck, the cornice crowned by a balustrade. Its unusual feature was the front, which had a stone terrace and a two-story Corinthian porch in the Colossal order, with curves

15. *Westminster Street, Providence as it was about 1824*, from drawings made by Francis Reed, a publication of the Rhode Island Historical Society (Providence, 1917).

16. Boston Store was established by Callender, McAuslan & Troup Co. on Westminster Street in 1866. A building was erected 1873 (William R. Walker, architect), subsequently enlarged and altered.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

concentric with those of two bay windows and repeated in the fence upon the lot line. The house was replaced by Hoppin Homestead Building in 1875 (page 155).

The first monumental business building was the Arcade, erected by Cyrus Butler and the Arcade Realty Company in 1828. This structure, designed by Russell Warren and James C. Bucklin,¹⁷ and extending through to Weybosset Street, instituted a Greek revival in architectural technique that was destined to supersede Colonial traditions. Its walls were built of granite, 216 feet long, with center projections giving the plan the form of a cross. At each end is a portico, 74 feet wide and 15 feet deep, with six Ionic columns, set between



R.I.H.S.

The Arcade, 1828, Weybosset Street.

square *antae* or pilasters, from which stone steps descend to the sidewalk. Above the entablatures the two street facades differ, Bucklin's Westminster Street end having a pediment and Warren's end, on Weybosset Street (illustration above), having an *attic* or parapet. The shafts, cut by Joseph Olney at Bare Ledge quarry in Johnston, are 21 feet high and three feet wide—the largest monoliths in America at the time of erection. They were hauled to the building site on low gears or sledges, drawn by many yokes of oxen. A corridor extends through the building, open to the skylighted roof, flanked by three stories of shops, those on the upper levels fronting on balconies which are reached by flights of

17. Russell Warren (1784–1882), born in Tiverton and a resident of Bristol, was a self-trained architect and the earliest exponent of the Greek revival in Rhode Island. James C. Bucklin (1801–80) served an apprenticeship with John Holden Greene and later entered partnership with William Tallman, a builder and dealer in lumber. Bucklin was architect of the Westminster Street half of the Arcade and Warren was retained by the Arcade Realty Company for the Weybosset Street half.

stone stairs in the porticos. The Arcade was threatened with demolition in 1944, but escaped the building wrecker through its purchase by the Rhode Island Association for the Blind as an investment for its capital funds and as a historic monument.

Bucklin again used the Greek temple motive in the design of Westminster Congregational Church, erected on Mathewson Street in 1829. This was a stucco-covered stone building with a *prostyle* portico composed of eight fluted Ionic columns and an entablature, all of wood. The building was discontinued as a church when the society erected Woodbury Memorial Chapel on Adelaide Avenue in 1902. The portico was removed and the building altered as a motion picture theatre, later remodeled for business uses.



R.I.H.S.

Candace Allen house, 1822, 12 Benevolent Street.

During the closing years of the Early Republican period of architecture the works of John Holden Greene were of particular significance for their monitor roof design, a technique effected by raising the central hipped roof section to provide a row of small attic windows on all four sides. Three dwellings have survived which were erected, respectively, for Candace Allen (1822) at 12 Benevolent Street, Truman Beckwith (1826) at 42 College Street (now the Handicraft Club), and Benoni Cooke (1828) at 112 South Main Street (the Old Stone Bank annex). These houses are brick, two stories each, and follow the Colonial plan of a central hall and end chimneys (plan C, page 46), with wings and stable yards. The Allen and Beckwith houses have front entrance porches, the former Corinthian and the latter Ionic, each with an elliptical window in the second story over the porch (see illustrations,

WEYBOSSET SIDE

pages 99 and 128). The Cooke entrance is on the side, a story above a stone basement (now a banking room), and reached by a long flight of stone steps. Originally this was one of a pair of similar houses with a common courtyard; the other, built for Rufus Greene, was demolished in 1898.

The monitor roof was also adopted for small wood houses in which the entrance and hall were in a corner. The William Watson house¹⁸ at 69 College Street (razed 1954), attributed to Greene, had corner quoins and a fine entrance with elliptical toplight framed with colonnettes. A similar entrance survives at 116 Hope Street.

Actuated by the rapid increase in population and the apparent need of a change in the form of municipal government the freemen of Providence petitioned the General Assembly in 1829 for a city charter. This was granted, subject to approval of three-fifths vote of the freemen, but failed of ratification by ballot February 15, 1830. In September, 1831, serious riots took place in Olney's Lane and Smith Street that were not broken up until the state militia had been summoned. Town meetings were held at which the riots were attributed to inefficiency on the part of the town government, and the question of a city charter was re-opened with the result that over 70 percent of the freemen voted on October 22 in favor of the charter. On November 22, 1831, an act to incorporate the City of Providence was passed by the General Assembly, and went into operation June 4, 1832. Inauguration of the new city government took place on that date in the hall of the House of Representatives at the State House (the former Colony House), when the oath of office was administered to Samuel W. Bridgham, the first mayor.

Under the city charter Providence was divided into six wards,¹⁹ for each of which an alderman and four councilmen were elected who, together with the mayor, constituted the administrative authority. In principle the mayor and the Board of Aldermen took over the powers of the former Town Council; the Common Council, representing the citizens, exercised control of matters formerly requiring approval of the town; and the two boards in convention assumed the activities of former town meetings.²⁰

18. This was for many years the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sydney R. Burleigh. Mr. Burleigh, a distinguished water-colorist, erected a studio, Fleur-de-lis House, at 7 Thomas Street in 1885 (Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects).

19. The ward boundaries were approximately as follows: Ward 1, the upper East Side north of Lloyd Avenue, and the area between Moshassuck river and the North Providence line north of Woonasquatucket river. Ward 2, the middle East Side, from Lloyd Avenue southerly to a line zigzagging from Power Street to Pitman Street. Ward 3, the lower East Side. Ward 4, the West Side south of Woonasquatucket river, east of Dean Street and north of Westminster and Weybosset streets. Ward 5, the West Side, south of Weybosset and Broad streets, east of Plain Street, and west of Providence river. Ward 6, the western part of the West Side.

20. Field, III, 83.

CHAPTER 10 1832 - 1845

AT the time Providence received a city charter Andrew Jackson was President of the United States and 20 states had been admitted to the Union, extending the territory westward to Mississippi river. Rhode Island was composed of five counties and 31 corporate municipalities and its governor, elected under the Royal Charter of 1663, was Lemuel H. Arnold of Providence. The city's population numbered about 17,000 and its



R.I.H.S.

City Hotel, 1832-1903, Weybosset Street.

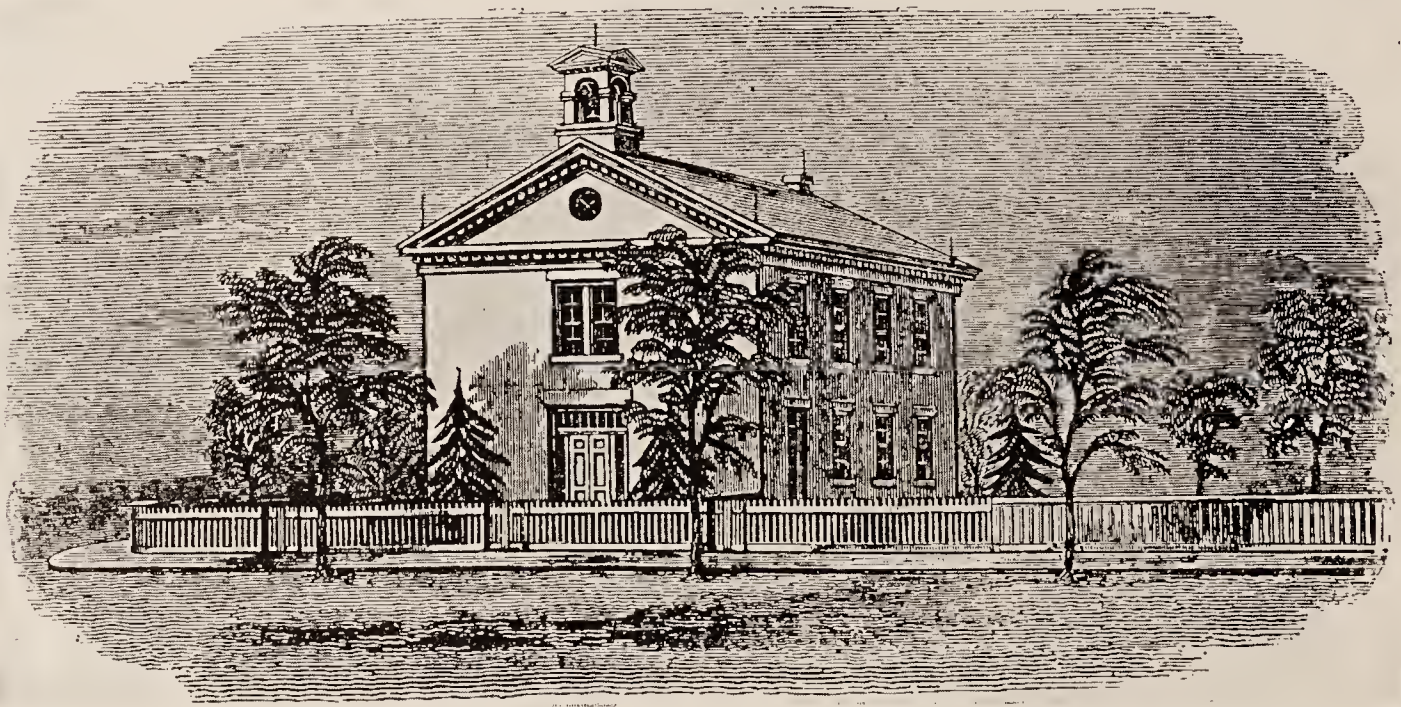
area included about $5\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, with 60 miles of streets, the more important of which were lighted at night by oil lamps. Fire protection was provided by volunteer fire companies equipped with hand engines and stationary force pumps. A night watch performed the functions of a police department.

The City Hotel (illustration above) was erected on Broad (Weybosset) Street in 1832, a four-story building with a well-proportioned facade and a Greek Doric entrance

WEYBOSSET SIDE

porch, which received distinguished patronage for many years.¹ Other hotels in operation at that time included Hoyle Tavern (page 54), Mansion House (page 55), Franklin House (page 89), Manufacturers Hotel (page 48), American House (southwest corner of North Main and Steeple streets), National House (North Main Street, opposite School of Design Auditorium), and Providence Hotel (North Main Street, north of Thomas Street).

Following the repeal of the school act (page 62) by the General Assembly in 1803 Providence maintained public schools without state assistance until a new act was passed in 1828. Under provisions of that act a new school committee of 21 members was elected with exclusive control of the schools. When the city charter was adopted there were twelve public schools with a total enrollment of 1200 pupils.² An ordinance was passed in 1838, involving broad principles and important changes in the school system, including the establishment of graded schools and the creation of the office of superintendent of schools



Standard primary school design, 1842, by Tallman and Bucklin.

to which Nathan Bishop was appointed in 1839. Following passage of the ordinance a committee was named to make an examination of the public schoolhouses, and reported that all of them were "unfit for use in their present condition . . . either too small, too delapidated, or too badly constructed to be worth rebuilding." Forthwith a building committee was authorized to proceed with a construction program of new buildings and alterations, and engaged Tallman and Bucklin as architects. That firm prepared standard plans for graded schools (illustration above) and, by the close of 1842, six grammar and

1. The City Hotel adjoined Teutonia House (page 79) on the east. It was torn down in 1903 and replaced by a unit of the Outlet Company.

2. Staples, pp. 512-513. The schools were incorporated into five districts, each with a writing (grammar) and a primary school. The writing schools were located on Meeting Street (Brick Schoolhouse), Benefit Street (Whipple Hall), Transit Street, Claverick Street and Pond Street. There were, in addition, one writing and one primary school for colored children.

1832 - 1845

ten primary schoolhouses were erected.³ Typical of the grammar schools was the Benefit Street School, erected on the site of Whipple Hall (page 62), a two-story brick building, 70 by 40 feet in area, enlarged in 1893 and still in use in 1950 at the corner of Benefit and Halsey streets.

The first high school (illustration below) was built at the corner of Benefit and Angell streets and was dedicated March 20, 1843.⁴ It is a three-story building, designed by Tallman and Bucklin, with walls of granite and pressed brick, a Classic pilastered entrance, and a low gable roof. It was purchased by the state and enlarged for a normal school in 1877 (page 152) and later was occupied, successively, by the University School, the Rhode Island



R.I.H.S.

High School, 1843, 205 Benefit Street, later known as Supreme Court Building.

College of Pharmacy, the Rhode Island Supreme Court and, more recently, by social service agencies.

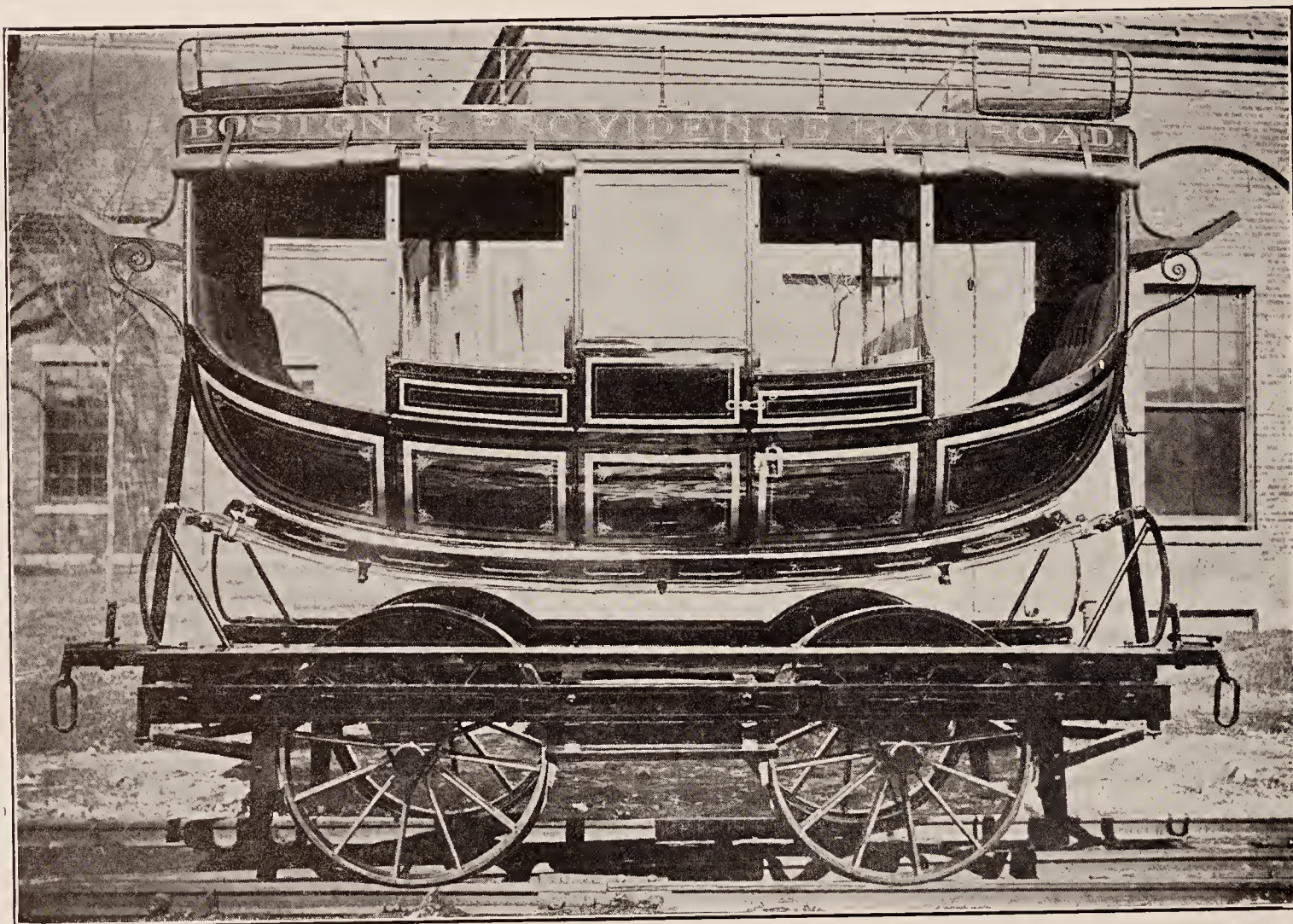
The functions of stage coaches, for the carriage of passengers and freight, were challenged upon the advent of the steam railroads. Long distance routes were the first affected while local lines continued to operate until horse cars (page 132) made their appearance in the Civil War period.

3. "A Brief Sketch of the Establishment of the High School," *C.D. No. 29*, 1878, pp. 3-9.

4. *C.D. No. 29*, 1878. Nathan Bishop, Superintendent of Schools, was principal of the high school.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

The first steam railroad line to operate out of Providence was the Boston and Providence, incorporated in Massachusetts in 1831. Rails were laid from Boston through Attleboro, East Junction and Rumford and followed the east shore of Seekonk river, then a part of Massachusetts, to a spot opposite India Point. Subsequently the Providence Railroad and Transportation Company, chartered in Rhode Island, erected a bridge across Seekonk river, a short distance below India Bridge (page 83), over which the rails were



R.I.H.S.

Boston & Providence Railroad carriage.

extended to a terminus at India Point where a passenger depot and wharves were erected.⁵ The two companies were merged in 1853.

The first passage over the route from Providence to Boston was made, somewhat prematurely, June 2, 1835. The engine, delivered from a firm in Philadelphia the day before, proved defective and each of the two cars was drawn, instead, by a pair of horses as far as Canton, Massachusetts, where the rails were blocked by an uncompleted viaduct. The passengers were transported a short distance by stages and completed the journey

⁵ The depot stood at the foot of Ives Street until destroyed in the hurricane of September 21, 1938 (page 270). See illustration, page 106.

to Boston by steam power.⁶ After a few days the railroad was operating without interruptions (illustration, page 104).

In 1837 a railroad was opened from Providence to Stonington, Connecticut, by the New York, Providence and Boston Railroad Company, incorporated 1832. The rails approached Providence from the south over the route now followed by the main line and the Harbor Junction Branch of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad and continued over Pawtuxet Turnpike (Eddy Street, page 84) to a terminus on a wharf opposite the end of the present Crary Street, from which passengers were ferried to the Boston and Providence depot at India Point. The opening of the road was celebrated at Stonington, November 10, 1837, upon arrival of the steamboat *Narragansett* which had sailed from New York with invited guests the previous evening. The party left Stonington in two trains of "superb cars" and by means of the locomotives *Stonington* and *Little Rest* they "sped rapidly over the course on their way to Providence."⁷ The railroad was opened to the public November 17 with trains scheduled to leave Stonington Wednesday, Friday and Sunday mornings, after the arrival of the steamboat from New York, and to leave Providence Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons on arrival of the "New York trains of railroad cars from Boston."⁸

The two terminals in Providence, and the connecting ferry, were maintained until a through railroad line was opened in 1848 (page 115) and, during that period, the India Point section (page 57), a scene of commercial activity during the seafaring age, again became a busy center. In the year in which the railroad depot was opened a large dwelling, erected about 1810 by J. B. Mason, son-in-law of John Brown (page 57), on the site of the present Fox Point School, was converted into a hotel known as Tockwotton Hall (illustration, page 106). This was an imposing three-story building, surrounded on three sides by a Doric portico and crowned by a square cupola in the center of the roof. It was purchased by the city in 1850 and converted into a reform school (page 123); it was razed in the 1880's.

The Boston and Providence Railroad proved a stimulus to steamboat traffic between Providence and New York, as appears by advertisements in the *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal*, in 1837. The New York and Boston Steamboat Company operated the *Providence* and *Benjamin Franklin* with daily trips from Fox Point to New York, and the *Boston* and *Lexington* were run by rival companies. The Tremont mail coach from Boston made connection with some of the steamboats.

The General Assembly passed an act at the January session, 1837, requiring that whenever any flat, shoal, or piece of land covered with tidewaters, within the limits of the city of Providence, thereafter should be filled in, a permanent stone wall should first be erected at the water line of same to prevent the filling from being crowded outward into the public waters.⁹ The provisions of the act led to the extension of the stone retaining walls bordering Providence river north of Fox Point and, eventually to the erection of walls for the confinement of the cove basin (page 115).

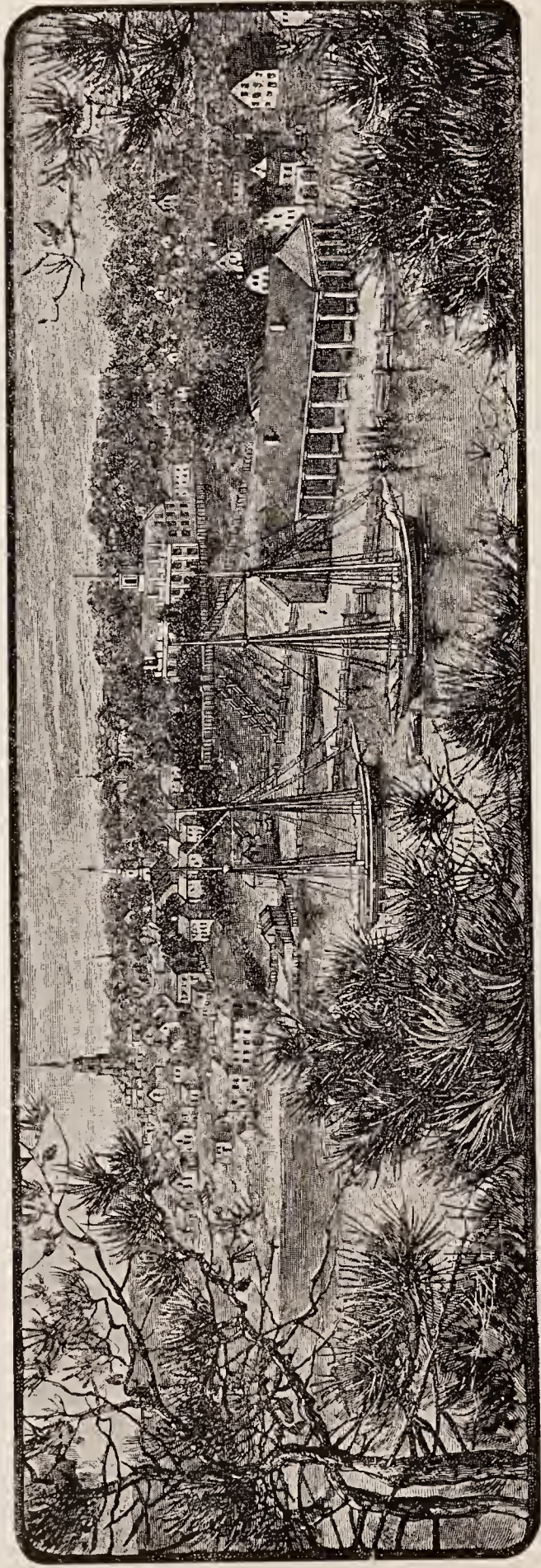
By direction of Mayor Bridgham a committee made an investigation, in 1838, as to the state of Weybosset Bridge and the one "next north" (Cove Street Bridge, page 95). In its report, dated November 5 of that year, recommendation was made that both bridges should be "repaired and rebuilt of wood of the best materials gravelled and paved upon the most approved plan." Subsequently a petition was filed with the City Council for widening Weybosset Bridge 30 feet on the south side thereof, which was protested March 11, 1839

6. *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal*, June 8, 1835.

7. *Ibid*, Nov. 13, 1837.

8. *Ibid* (advertisement).

9. *Report of the Commissioners of the Cove Lands*, 1877, p. 171.



R.I.H.S.
View of India Point, c. 1840, from a drawing made from a painting in possession of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Railroad depot in right foreground; Tockwotton Hall above.



MERCHANTS AND MINERS TRANSPORTATION CO.

From Greene's *Providence Plantations*
Lonsdale Wharf, India Street, c. 1885

by a committee of freemen of the city, including Nathaniel Bishop, Joshua Mauran and 46 others, on the ground that the proposed widening would "greatly impede if not entirely prevent vessels and boats from landing and marketing their cargoes of fish, vegetables and fruit so essential to their convenience and so necessary for the inhabitants of our common city."¹⁰ Action was delayed until 1843 in which year Weybosset Bridge was rebuilt, 135 feet in width, 40 feet wider than the preceding span.¹¹

Architectural design, during the 1830s, underwent a transition from Colonial precedent to a Greek revival, as illustrated by two contemporary houses still standing on Brown Street. The Goddard house (No. 38) originally was a square three-story hipped roof block, following traditional motives, with its entrance on George Street. The Moses B. Ives house (No. 10), originally entered from Charles Field Street, was similar in plan, but the two-story walls were stuccoed and the pedimented roof ends were Greek-influenced. Chancellor William Goddard of Brown University added a large wing to the Goddard house in 1881 (Stone and Carpenter, architects), including a Doric entrance porch. To the Ives house a service wing and a piazza were added in 1870. This house was given by Mrs. Henry G. Russell, daughter of Mr. Ives, to the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island as a bishop's residence in 1898. Chancellor Goddard's house was deeded in his memory to Brown by his daughter, Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin, in 1940.

The Greek revival had its origin in England in the latter part of the 18th century. Its techniques were exemplified in architectural books containing measured reproductions of many of the temples of ancient Greece, the facades of which were copied to serve as frontispieces for buildings in which modern requirements were accommodated.¹² The earliest temple design in Providence was the Arcade (page 98), erected in 1828, whose associated architects, Russell Warren and James C. Bucklin, became the leading exponents of the Greek revival in subsequent years.

The temple form of facade, including a *pronaos* or portico, was used in the design of Manning Hall, the Greene Street School, and Providence Athenæum, the first two *prostyle* in form, having full length colonnades, and the third *in antis*, its columns enclosed between the projecting side walls. Manning Hall (illustration, page 108), erected on the Brown campus in 1834 and named for the first president of the college,¹³ was designed by Bucklin who took as his model the temple of Diana-Propylea in Eleusis. The building, designed for a library and a chapel, is stucco-coated and has four fluted Doric columns rising from a *stylobate* or platform on the principal facade, crowned by an entablature and pediment ornamented by academic details. In contrast with the Arcade, where the temple design is confined to the two street facades, Manning Hall has four exposed walls and a continuous entablature.

The Providence Athenæum (illustration, page 109), designed by William Strickland of Philadelphia, was erected, in 1838, at the corner of Benefit and College streets. The library was founded in 1831, with headquarters first established in the Arcade, and was merged with the Providence Library Company (page 28) and incorporated in 1836. The facade of the two-story granite building, less academic than that of Manning Hall, has a recessed portico on the second or main floor level, reached by steps rising between two

10. C.C. *Papers*, March 11, 1839.

11. C.E., *Plan showing River Lines and Street Lines between Crawford Street Bridge and Weybosset Bridge*, No. 040215, July 15, 1914.

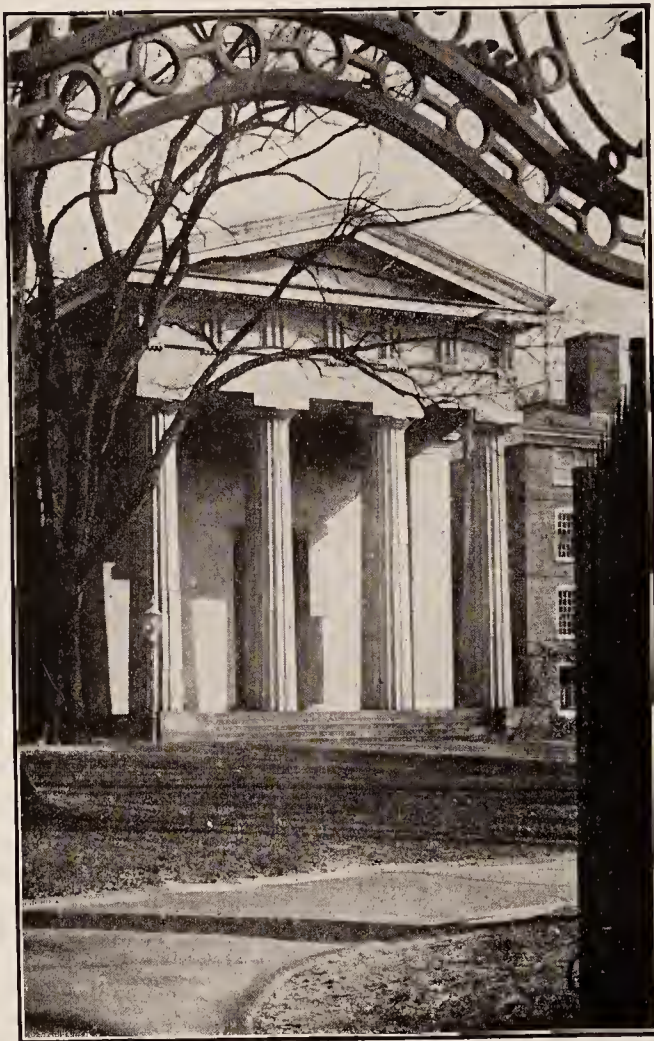
12. A. D. F. Hamlin, *A Text-Book of the History of Architecture* (New York, 1904), p. 354.

13. James Manning, 1765-91.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

Doric columns. The ground floor, entered by side doors, was designed to accommodate the Providence Franklin Society by which it was used until 1849. The main floor was altered to its present status, with alcoves and galleries, in 1867, from plans by Bucklin and an east wing, designed by Norman M. Isham, was added in 1913. A drinking fountain, donated by Mrs. Anna Richmond, was set up in front of the building in 1873.

Greene Street School, erected in 1837, was noteworthy for its portico, composed of six Doric columns. This private school, of which B. F. Jacobs and Miss Sarah S. Jacobs were principals, included on its faculty such distinguished educators as Margaret Fuller and Richard Harding Dana.¹⁴ The school was discontinued after ten years of operation; it is no longer standing.



Courtesy of the *Brown Alumni Monthly*

Manning Hall, 1834, Brown University.

In many buildings of the Greek Revival period the traditional portico and columns were omitted and the walls were divided into vertical panels by *antae* or pilasters, crowned by an academic entablature and gable roof. Of such design was the State Prison (see map, page 117), erected in 1838 at Great Point,¹⁵ on the west shore of the cove. It was a two-story

14. Mason Wade, *Margaret Fuller, Whetstone of Genius* (New York, 1940).

15. When the cove basin was constructed in 1845 Gaspee Street was opened from Smith Street to the prison. The site later became a part of the grounds of the Rhode Island College of Education (page 194).

1832 - 1845

building composed of a keeper's house, its small entrance porch set in the center of the pedimented facade on the east, and a cell block extending toward the west. A north wing was built in 1839 for a county jail, superseding the former jail on Haymarket Street (page 95) and a south wing was added to the prison in 1852. The group of buildings was maintained until the present State Prison was opened in Cranston in 1878.¹⁶

In the design of Rhode Island Hall, erected on the Brown campus in 1840¹⁷ for the Department of Natural History and other sciences, architects Tallman and Bucklin departed from the academic plan by placing the entrance in the side wall, and providing an enclosed vestibule projecting from the center of the building. A rear wing was added in 1875.



Courtesy of Providence Athenæum

Providence Athenæum, 1838, 251 Benefit Street.

A small cabinet at 68 Waterman Street, designed for the Rhode Island Historical Society¹⁸ by Bucklin and erected in 1844, has a facade framed by corner pilasters and a

16. Field, III, 460.

17. The site was a parcel of land, south of the original college tract, donated by Nicholas Brown, Jr., in 1840. It was adjacent to the lot whereon the Edward Dexter house was then standing (page 64). Mr. Brown was a generous contributor to the cost of building Rhode Island Hall and the president's house, erected the same year on Prospect Street where John Hay Library now stands.

18. The formation of the Historical Society had its inception at a meeting held April 19, 1822, in the office of Judge William R. Staples, when means were considered for the collection and preservation of Rhode Island material. The society was incorporated in June, 1822, by Jeremiah Lippitt, William Aplin, Charles N. Tibbetts, Walter R. Danforth, William R. Staples, Richard W. Greene, John Brown Francis, William G. Goddard, Charles F. Tillinghast, Richard J. Arnold, Charles Jackson, and William E. Richmond. Before erection of the cabinet meetings were held, successively, in the State House, the counting house of Brown and Ives, and the Arcade.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

pedimented entablature with a large central portal with a grilled transom. Two wings were built in 1891 and a further addition was made in 1913 (illustration below). The society sold the building to Brown University in 1942 and moved its quarters to the John Brown house on Power Street (page 63).

The Washington Buildings (illustration, page 178), erected by the Providence Washington Insurance Company in 1843 on Washington Row, in replacement of its former structure (page 62), constituted the most important business group of the period. Architect James



R.I.H.S.

Historical Society Cabinet, 1844, 68 Waterman Street.

C. Bucklin effected an interesting composition with a central pilastered unit of granite crowned by an entablature and pediment, flanked by two brick two-story wings, each with a wood cornice and balustrade.

The Roman Catholic church of Saints Peter and Paul, the first of that denomination in Providence, a small, gable-roofed edifice with walls of rough stone covered with stucco, was erected on High (Westminster) Street and consecrated November 4, 1838. The entrance, reached by two-way steps, was set in a central tower framed by corner piers and crowned by an ornamental balustrade and finials. It was enlarged in 1847 to become the Cathedral of Bishop Tyler and was demolished to make way for the present cathedral in 1878.¹⁹ Another

19. Field, II, 198.

Catholic church, Saint Patrick's, designed by Russell Warren, was built on State Street in 1842. Three bells were imported from a convent in Spain by Philip Allen, two of which were donated to these churches and the third hung in the tower of Allen's Print Works on Branch Avenue.²⁰ Saint Patrick's was razed when the present church of that name was erected (page 226).

Among the Protestant churches established during the period, one was a remodeled theatre and two others later were converted into playhouses. Grace Church, organized in 1829, purchased the Providence Theatre²¹ which was altered in the Gothic style by Russell Warren, in 1832, and served the uses of the parish until the present edifice was built on its site in 1846 (page 126). Power Street Methodist Church was constituted in 1833 and services were held in a brick building at the corner of South Main and Power streets until 1874 when its name was changed to Hope Street Methodist Church and a new structure erected (page 152). The vacated South Main Street building was converted into Amateur Dramatic Hall, later identified as Talma Theatre, following the incorporation of the Talma Club, an amateur group, organized in 1887, which gave plays there during the ensuing twenty years. The building became the Providence Boys' Club in 1922. Saint Stephen's Church, established in 1833, erected its first building at the corner of Benefit and Transit streets in 1840 where services were held until the present church on George Street was consecrated in 1862 (page 137). The Benefit Street building subsequently became the Church of the Saviour and was finally acquired in 1932 by The Players and converted into Barker Playhouse (page 247).

A Quaker Meeting House was erected at the corner of Meeting and North Main streets in 1844, replacing the former edifice (page 26) which was moved to a lot on Hope Street and converted into a dwelling. The new meeting house was a frame structure with a low gable roof, reflecting Greek influence.²²

The Providence Marine Corps of Artillery, a chartered command incorporated in 1801, erected an arsenal (illustration, page 112) on Benefit Street in 1840 which was acquired later by the state and served as the State Armory until the present Cranston Street Armory was opened in 1908. The massive walls of the building were built of chipped stone and covered with cement, the facade composed of a central portal of Gothic design, rising nearly the full height of the pedimented facade and flanked on either side by a square turreted tower. The arsenal was moved a short distance north to its present location at the corner of Meeting Street when the railroad tunnel was built in 1905 (page 201).

The domestic architecture of the Greek Revival period was marked by an increase in story heights and by bolder and heavier details than previously had been employed. The Joseph Carpenter house (c. 1843), a wood dwelling which stood on the site of the Providence Public Library on Washington Street, had a portico across the front with four full-height Corinthian columns crowned by an entablature and pediment. The more typical house of the period had a small projecting entrance porch, designed in one of the classic orders, in the center or the corner of the street front (illustration, page 113). Less academic was the house erected for Benjamin Harris at the corner of George and Megee streets, in 1835, one of the later designs by John Holden Greene. It was a single-story dwelling, its principal rooms grouped around a rotunda which contained a stairway leading to an attic; a Doric

20. *Providence Visitor*, April 11, 1915. See also page 171.

21. See page 60. Grace Church Cemetery was established in 1834 at the junction of Pawtuxet (Broad) and Greenwich Street (Elmwood Avenue) as a burial place for members of the church.

22. The Meeting House was razed in 1952 and a fire station erected on its site. A new meeting house was built at 89 Morris Avenue (Harkness and Geddes, architects).

WEYBOSSET SIDE

portico, with columns and a pediment, formed the entrance and a balustrade surrounded the roof. The house was torn down about 1916. Another distinguished house of the period, designed by Russell Warren, was erected for William Foster at 19 Charles Field Street



R.I.H.S.

Marine Corps Arsenal, 1840, Benefit Street.

about 1840. The facade was composed of heavy pilasters and a two-story recessed entrance porch with standing columns, all having capitals reminiscent both of Corinthian and Egyptian motives. A square cupola crowned the hipped roof (illustration, page 169). The house was razed in 1955 to make way for a Brown quadrangle.

1832 - 1845

A struggle on the part of the people to secure extended suffrage in Rhode Island was climaxed in 1842 by the Dorr Rebellion. The state had never adopted a constitution and was governed by an Assembly, set up under the Charles II charter of 1663 (page 12), which had excessive powers and was elected by the freemen, constituting the landed aristocracy. While the system worked during the 17th and 18th centuries, it was regarded with increasing disfavor as the population increased and civic functions became more complex. Criticism was focused particularly on the inequality of the towns' representation in the General Assembly and on the voting restrictions imposed by that body. Following several ineffectual



R.I.H.S.

Early 19th century houses on Williams Street.

attempts to adopt a constitution the Rhode Island Suffrage Association was formed by certain inhabitants of Providence, soon to be followed by branches in the other towns of the state with the purpose of using the sovereign rights of the people to set up a new government. Failing to gain support of the General Assembly the association elected delegates to a People's Convention which was held October 4, 1841 at which a constitution was drafted, extending suffrage to every male citizen, 21 years or over, who had resided in the state one year or longer. This was submitted to the people at an election December 27 and, after the ballots had been counted at a re-assembled convention January 12, 1842, proclamation was made that the "People's Constitution" had been adopted. Meanwhile, a

WEYBOSSET SIDE

second convention had been held under authority of the General Assembly in November, 1841, at which a "Landholder's Constitution" was framed and submitted, in March, 1842, to the freemen, by whom it was rejected.

The people's election was held April 18, 1842 and the regular state election on April 20. The people elected as governor Thomas W. Dorr, leader of the suffrage movement, a former member of the General Assembly, and chairman of the Providence School Committee. The freemen re-elected Samuel Ward King governor at the charter election.

Dorr was inaugurated governor May 3, 1842, in a factory building near the corner of Eddy and Weybosset streets, and on the following day Governor King was inaugurated in the State House at Newport. With hostilities imminent both parties commenced military preparations. Dorr established headquarters in the residence of Burrington Anthony on Atwells Avenue and, on the night of May 17, led an attack on the state armory, then established in a mill on Cranston Street adjacent to Dexter Training Ground. He was opposed by militia summoned by Governor King, including the Providence Marine Corps of Artillery and chartered commands from Newport, Bristol and Warren. At the armory Dorr was abandoned by many of his followers and the attack failed. He retreated to Connecticut to plan his further campaign and, on June 25, returned to Rhode Island and took up headquarters at Chepachet where his followers were entrenched at Acote Hill. The state militia marched there from Providence on June 28 and a "bloodless battle" was fought which ended in Dorr's flight and the charter forces in possession. On May 6, 1844 Dorr was found guilty of treason and was sentenced to prison for life.²³

The efforts of the Rhode Island Suffrage Association were not in vain for the present state constitution was adopted at a convention held in November, 1842, was ratified by the freemen at an election held in the same month, and became operative May 2, 1843. Thomas W. Dorr was released from prison June 27, 1845 and was restored to his civil and political rights by the General Assembly in 1851. His portrait, painted by Wilfred Duphiney, was unveiled in the State House by Governor Theodore Francis Green May 4, 1943.

23. Arthur May Mowry, *The Dorr War or the Constitutional Struggle in Rhode Island* (Providence, 1901).

CHAPTER 11 1845 - 1860

A CIVIC project of major importance was the filling of a part of the cove waters and the construction of an elliptical cove basin, with axes 1300 feet long and 1180 feet wide, surrounded by a promenade (see map, page 117). The plan was proposed by the Providence and Worcester Railroad Company, incorporated in 1844, with the objective of establishing tracks, yards, and terminals near the civic center.

Construction work was undertaken by the railroad company, in accordance with a City Council resolution and an accompanying plat, approved January 29, 1846, providing for the erection of a stone retaining wall with openings in the easterly rim for receiving the waters of Moshassuck river and for discharging the waters of the basin into Providence river.¹ The westerly segment of the wall was deferred (page 19).

The waters north, east and south of the retaining walls were filled and a promenade, 80 feet wide, was constructed around the ellipse, adjacent to the walls, with bridges over the river openings (see map, page 122). The filled lands, except those used for highways, were appropriated by the railroad for yards and buildings. Tracks were laid from Worcester, Massachusetts, on a road six rods wide, following Blackstone and Moshassuck valleys to Providence where they encircled the east and south borders of the Cove basin, outside the promenade. Construction work was far enough advanced to permit the operation of a passenger train from Providence to Millville, Massachusetts, September 27, 1847,² at which time the railroad's merchandise depot, erected that year on Canal Street, was used temporarily as a passenger terminal.

Exchange Bridge was erected diagonally across Providence river in 1848, a short distance east of the Cove basin (see map, page 117). It was of wood construction, 80 feet wide, and provided additional access from Cove Street (Exchange Place) to Canal Street.

A petition by the New York, Providence and Boston Railroad to extend the tracks of the Stonington Line (page 105), to connect with the Worcester Railroad, was granted by the City Council September 17, 1847, upon that company's agreement to build retaining walls where its property extended through the south part of the cove, and to erect highway overpasses where the railroad intersected High (Westminster) Street, Broadway and Atwells Avenue.³ The new route branched from the Stonington road just south of the present Providence-Cranston line, west of Roger Williams Park, and ran northerly, by Mashapaug and Benedict ponds, over the present main road to Woonasquatucket valley which it followed to the Cove basin. Shortly afterward the Boston and Providence Railroad received authority to extend its tracks from East Junction, Massachusetts, to the Providence and Worcester line at Central Falls and to run its trains over the latter company's rails into Providence, abandoning the India Point terminal (page 104) for passenger traffic.

1. *Report of the Commissioners of the Cove Lands*, 1877, pp. 4-5.

2. *Providence Journal*, Sept. 28, 1847. "Two trains of cars went over the Worcester Railroad yesterday, as far as Millville, twenty miles from Providence, and returned. Quite a large number of passengers filled the cars, and crowds were at the stopping places. All were delighted with the road and with all the arrangements, so far as they are completed. The cars will now run regularly, and very soon they will go over the whole road."

3. *Report of the Commissioners of the Cove Lands*, 1877, pp. 97-99.



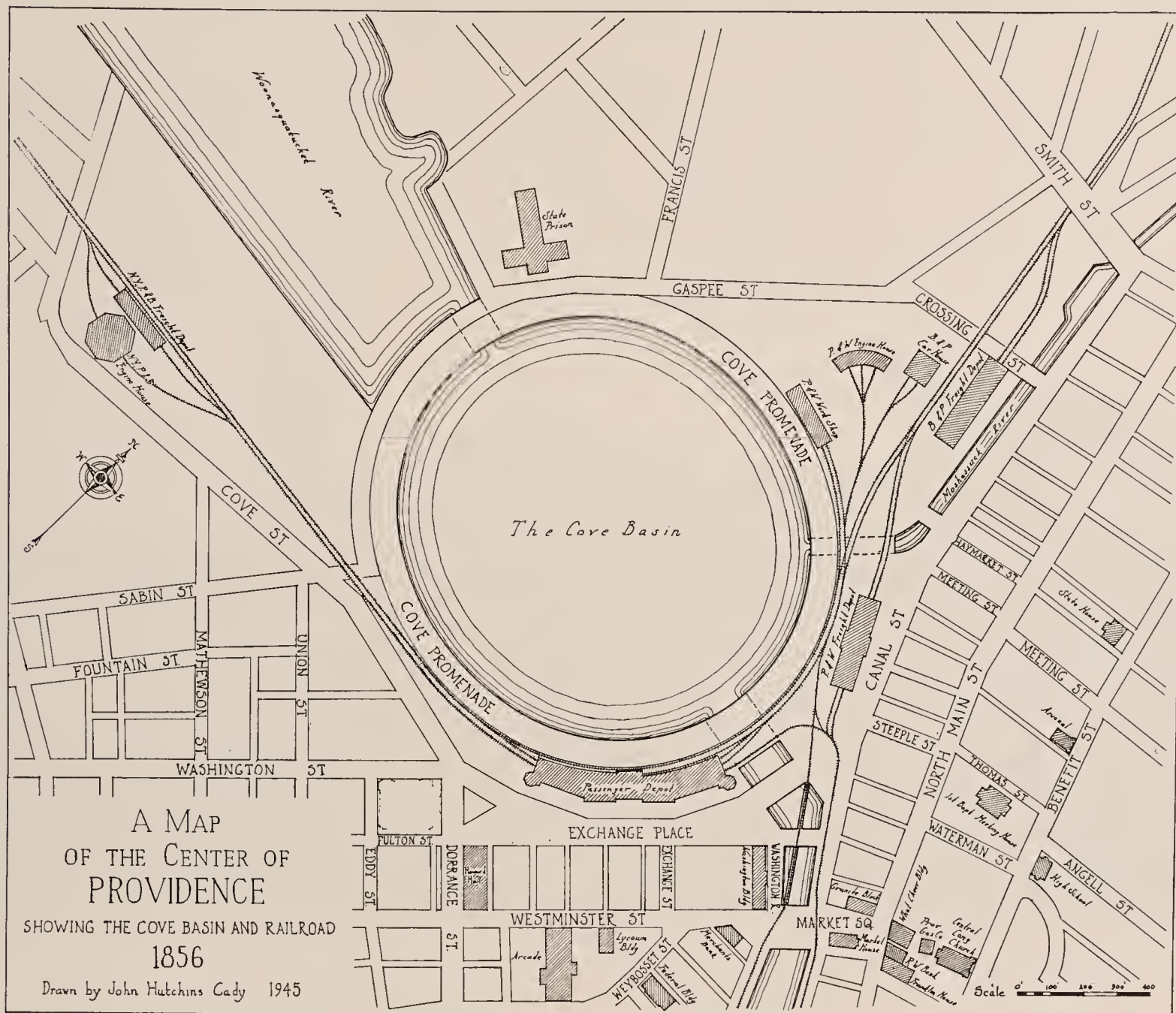
R.I.H.S.

View of Cove basin and promenade, from an engraving by Mallory, c. 1860. State Prison (1838-1878) in right foreground; Railroad Depot in center distance.

1845 - 1860

The railroads were required by the City Council to put up fences between the tracks and the Cove Promenade, and on both sides of their rights of way, and to erect gates at grade crossings.

The Union Passenger Depot (illustration, page 118) was erected by the Providence and Worcester Railroad in 1848,⁴ providing accommodations for all three companies, its north



side following the curve of the Cove basin and the south side facing Cove Street, which was re-named Exchange Place. The building was designed in the Romanesque manner by Thomas A. Tefft⁵ who made successful use of Lombard brick detail in various forms and

4. Authority for the erection of passenger and merchandise depots was provided in a City Council resolution, passed March 8, 1847.

5. Thomas A. Tefft, (1826-1859) entered the office of Tallman and Bucklin in 1845 and retained his connection with that firm while a student at Brown, from which he was graduated in 1851. He maintained his own office during the next five years, then went to Europe and died in Florence, Italy.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

patterns. The central motive of the facade was a broad central gable, set between tall towers, and the main block was flanked by two wings with arcaded fronts, terminating in octagonal pavilions. The depot was destroyed by fire in 1898 (page 180).

After the cove walls had been built it developed that mud flats were sometimes exposed within the basin at low tide. Accordingly, the City Council, in 1850, authorized the construction of a dam with flood gates near the outlet of the Cove basin, by means of which the waters of the basin were so impounded that the mud was no longer exposed. The dam



R.I.H.S.

Union Passenger Depot, 1848–1896, Exchange Place.

was not a complete success, however; a lack of care of the tide gates often permitted the ebb and flow of the tide, and damage was done to nearby property in times of freshets. The dam was removed in 1878.⁶

In 1852 the City Council authorized the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad, incorporated that year, to lay its rails in Providence, entering the city from the southwest, near Benedict pond, and continuing from that point, parallel with the New York, Provi-

6. Report of City Engineer Nolan, included in City Plan Commission, *Annual Report*, 1933, pp. 25–27.

dence and Boston roadbed, to the Union Depot.⁷ Under terms of the agreement between the city and the railroad additional areas of the south side of the cove were filled and the westerly segment of the basin walls was completed, with a bridged opening for the flow of Woonasquatucket river into the basin (see map, page 117). The railroad was opened from Hartford, Connecticut, to Providence in 1854.

In order to provide direct connection between the railroads and the docks permission was granted the railroad companies to lay tracks on Canal, South Water, Dyer, India, and other streets, over which freight cars were drawn by strings of eight or more horses, a means of locomotion continued for more than a half-century.

The next railroad to enter the city was the Providence, Warren and Bristol, the rails of which were laid in a southerly extension of the Boston and Providence line on the east side of Seekonk river. It was opened in 1855 and for the first two years its trains were hauled from the depot on Exchange Place, by horse power, over the highway rails and the railroad bridge and thence were operated by steam to Bristol. In 1857 a passenger terminal was built on India Street, near the foot of Benefit Street, from which the steam line was operated until 1908 (page 201). The railroad was extended to Fall River in 1860.

In the extreme northeast corner of the city and adjacent land in North Providence, extending from the Neck Road (page 15) to Seekonk river, two institutions had their inception toward the middle of the century, namely, Butler Hospital and Swan Point Cemetery. The hospital was located on the Grotto Farm, so-called, a tract of 114 acres which included, among the farm buildings, the Richard Brown house (page 33). The cemetery was developed on a 60-acre tract in North Providence, adjoining the hospital grounds on the north, which later, in 1873, was re-annexed to Providence (page 149).

Nicholas Brown, Jr., who died in 1841, bequeathed the sum of \$30,000 for the establishment of the hospital as a retreat for persons who were deprived of their reason. That amount was augmented by a number of donations, including \$40,000 from Cyrus Butler, in whose honor the institution was named Butler Hospital. Following its incorporation in 1844 a brick building was erected, designed by James C. Bucklin in the Tudor Gothic style, and was opened December 1, 1847.⁸

Swan Point Cemetery was platted into burial lots and avenues by Atwater and Schubarth, and lots were drawn at a gathering of subscribers October 20, 1846. Under provisions of a charter granted in May, 1847, the proprietors of lots became trustees of the company with power to purchase and hold land and to erect such buildings and other structures as should be requisite.⁹ A receiving tomb and a cottage were erected, both designed by Thomas A. Tefft, driveways were built, and the grounds were consecrated July 2, 1847. In the following year the First Congregational Society purchased an oval tract for its members, near the center of the grounds, to which the remains formerly interred in the West Burial Ground (page 60) were transferred.

The first important auditorium in Providence was Howard Hall, a name perpetuated in three successive buildings on the same site at the corner of Westminster and Dorrance streets. The first was built in 1847 and destroyed by fire six years later. The second was

7. *Report of the Commissioners of the Cove Lands*, 1877, pp. 129-135. The road later became the Willimantic Branch of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad.

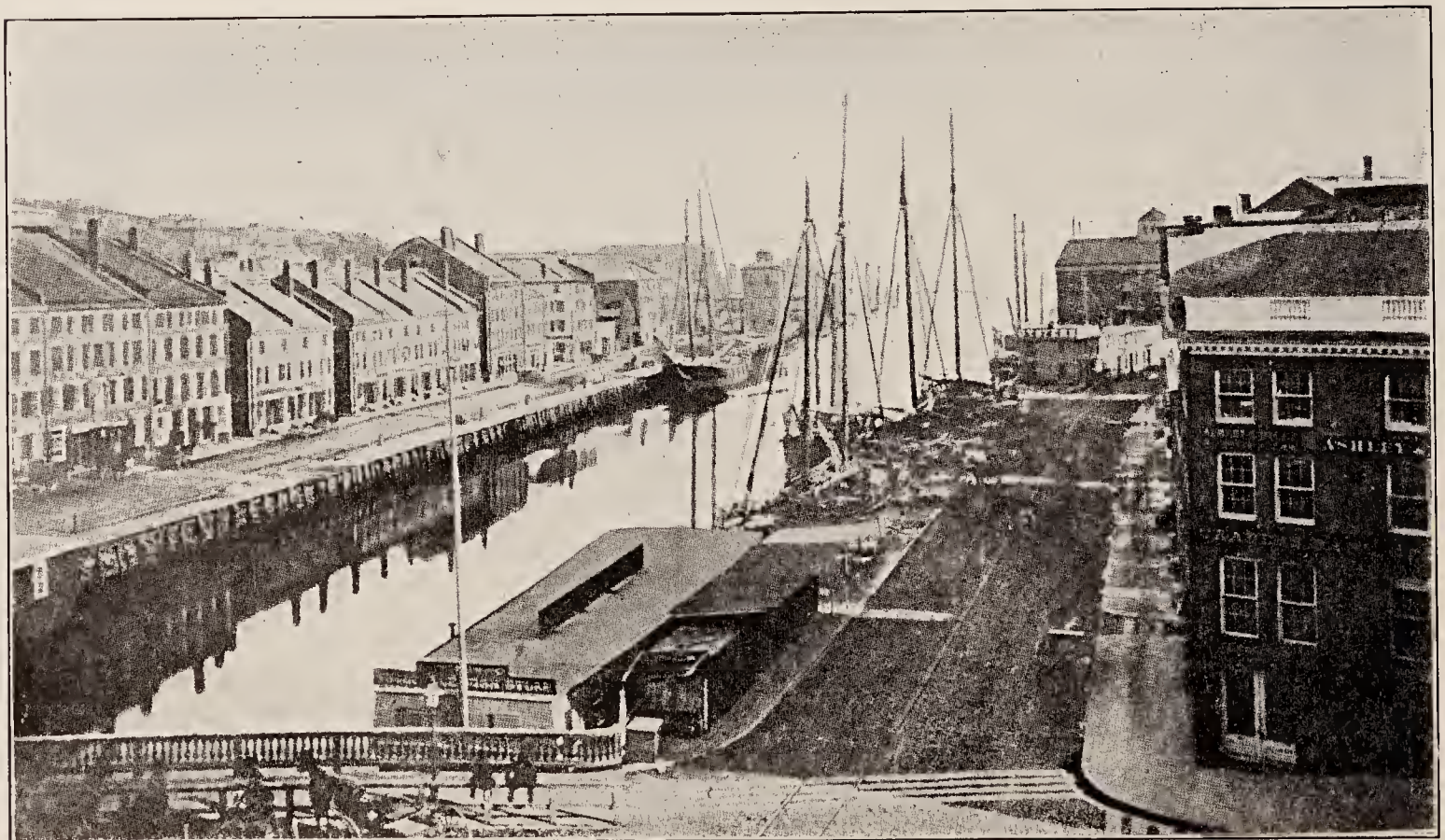
8. The hospital expanded in later years (pages 191, 229) but, by reason of mounting operating deficits, was closed September 1, 1955. It was re-opened on a limited scale as Butler Health Center in 1957.

9. Cady, *Swan Point Cemetery, A Centennial History* (Providence, 1947). A new charter was granted in 1858, creating a non-profit sharing corporation under the name of The Proprietors of Swan Point Cemetery.



R.I.H.S.

View of Market Square, c. 1849. Market House (1773) in center, behind which Roger Williams Bank Building (1823-1912) and Franklin House (1823) are partly visible. Manufacturers Hotel (1750-1850) at left.



R.I.H.S.

View south from Market Square, c. 1865, showing South Water and Dyer streets, as widened in 1854, and Union Bank Building (right) after its eastern portion had been sliced off.

erected in 1856, after the city had taken a part of the land for the widening of Dorrance Street (page 124), and lasted only two years before going up in flames. The third Howard Building (illustration, page 208), erected in 1859, survived for nearly a century. Each of the buildings had a hall for public entertainment. Jenny Lind gave a concert, and William Lloyd Garrison and Sam Houston spoke, in the original building. Adelina Patti sang and Ole Bull performed on the violin in the second. The third building had an auditorium occupying the second and third floors, seating 1200 persons, and among the celebrities heard there were Wendell Phillips, Daniel Webster, Henry Ward Beecher, Charles Sumner, Artemus Ward, John G. Saxe, George William Curtis, Bayard Taylor, Tom Thumb and Edgar Allen Poe.¹⁰ The building was altered in 1908, the hall converted into small offices, and a fifth floor added¹¹.

Adjacent to the Howard Building Forbes Theatre was opened in 1854 and burned four years later. On its site the aptly-named "Phenix" Building was erected in 1860, on the second story of which the Academy of Music was established. The auditorium floor was pitched and a gallery occupied the third floor of the building. Among the performers in the academy were Booth, the elder Sothern, Mrs. Scott-Siddons, Miss Cushman, Maggie Mitchell, and the minstrel troupe of Morris Brothers, Pell and Trowbridge.¹² The building was damaged by fire in 1873 and was rebuilt as an office building, still standing at 157 Westminster Street.

Swarts Hall, later known as the Pine Street Theatre, was opened in the former Pine Street Baptist Church (page 75) at the corner of Pine and Dorrance streets in 1854, where variety shows were given for a few years.¹³

In 1847 the Providence Gas Company was incorporated and commenced, in the following year, the manufacture and supply of gas in a plant located at the corner of Benefit and Pike streets. Mains were laid first in the principal downtown thoroughfares and, as the system was extended, gas superseded oil for highway illumination.

A map of Providence, published by Cushing and Walling in 1849,¹⁴ shows the awkward street pattern of Weybosset side well along in process of development. The radial highways, converging toward the bottle neck at Weybosset Bridge, formed the basis of the plan, to which secondary streets had been added from time to time as farm lands were platted for buildings lots and recorded by succeeding town and city councils. Owners of adjacent property seldom attempted to coordinate the highway lines of their respective plats and the results may still be observed in the large number of staggered and dead-end streets. As the city expanded westerly toward Olneyville (then a part of Johnston) the highway pattern took the form of an hourglass with Broadway and High Street converging from the east into the present Olneyville Square and the turnpikes to Connecticut spreading out toward the west.

The fundamental obstacles to an easy-flowing highway system were the hills, waterways, swamps, and other elements of topography. Even on the Neck, where a more orderly

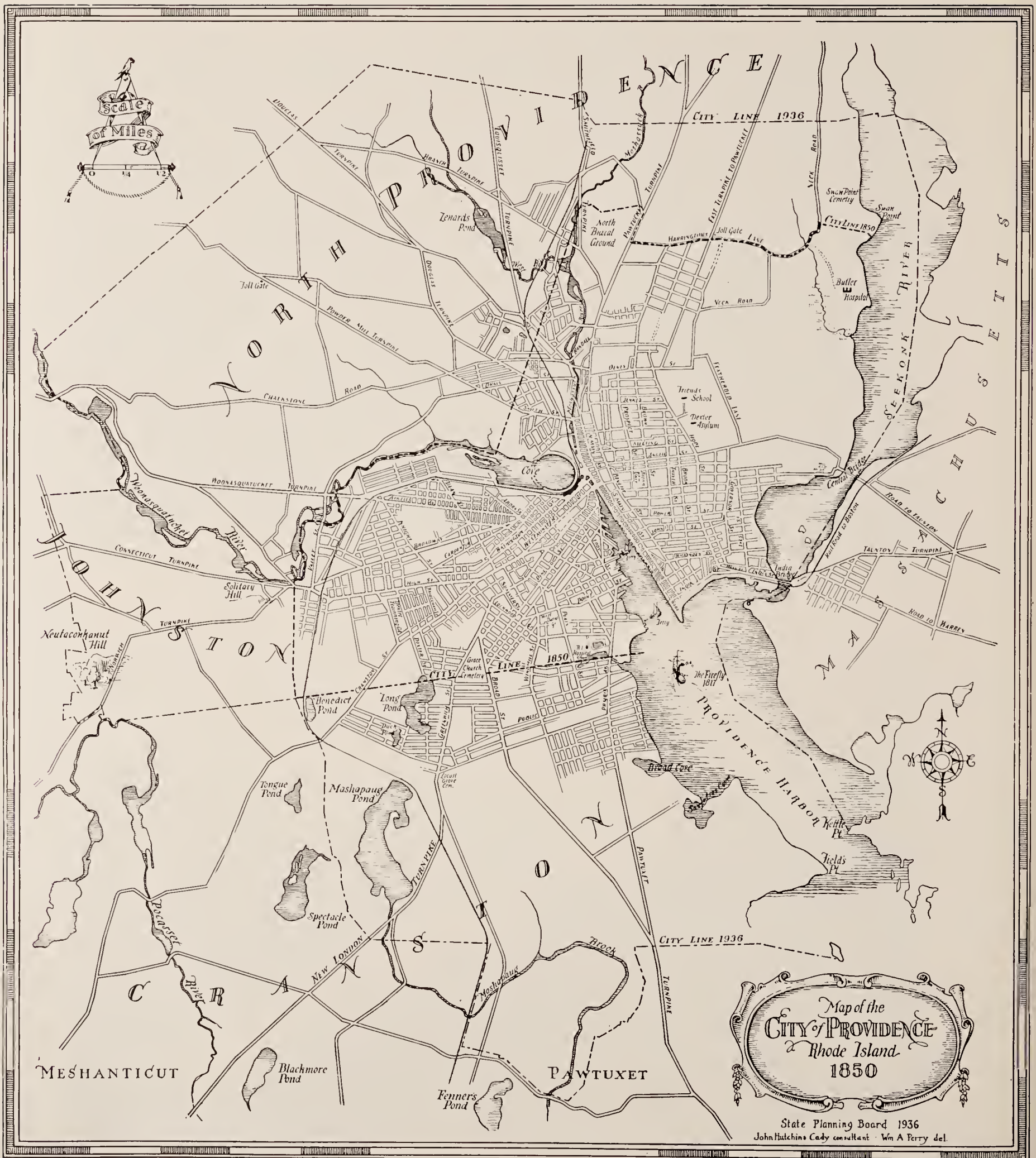
10. Merchants National Bank, *Old Providence* (1908), p. 56.

11. The foundations of Howard Building were found to be in process of sinking in 1955, largely as a result of flooding in the 1938 and 1954 hurricanes (pages 270, 274). Accordingly the building was razed and construction of the fourth Howard Building (Harkness and Geddes, architects) was started in 1957.

12. *Providence Magazine*, October, 1916, p. 649.

13. Greene, p. 360

14. The map on page 122 is based upon the Cushing and Walling map. Spotted on the latter are 14 hotels, eight of which are identified on page 102, the others including Weybosset House, corner of Weybosset and Orange streets; Foster's, Broad (Weybosset) Street, near Eddy; Earl House, 67 North Main Street; Exchange Hotel, corner of Washington and Eddy; Tockwotton Hotel (page 105); and Washington Hotel, Weybosset Street at Dunnell's Gangway.



Adapted from Cushing and Walling map of 1849

pattern had been achieved, many of the cross streets were of such excessive steepness as to be almost impassable. The confinement of the waters of the cove into an elliptical basin was a help in overcoming the handicap imposed by the waterways. The Neck and Weybosset Side were now joined by three highway bridges and additional means of traffic were provided by the operation of river ferries, one crossing from James Street to Ship Street and the other from India Street to the New York, Providence and Boston dock. In granting a right of way to the railroads, however, with their tracks laid at grade, the City Council, unwittingly, was imposing another obstacle to the highway system that was to cause much trouble in later generations.

In 1850 the Providence Reform School was organized under control of a board of trustees of which the mayor was chairman. For a building the city purchased Tockwotton Hall, near India Point (page 105), and later extended its grounds by the acquisition of adjoining property. Control of the school was transferred to the state in 1880 and the institution was removed from Providence, two years later, upon completion of Sockanosset School for boys and Oaklawn School for girls, in Cranston.

A police force was established in 1851 by the appointment of ten men to patrol the streets in daytime, under direction of a city sergeant. The night watch (page 60) was reorganized and divided into five districts, with the central station quartered in the Town House (page 67) on College Street and the other stations located, respectively, on Charles, Wickenden, Summer and Richmond streets.

The volunteer fire companies¹⁵ were disbanded in 1854 when an ordinance was passed establishing a board of engineers, its staff consisting of a chief engineer, five assistants and 450 firemen. Most of the latter were subject to call, were paid for each fire answered, and were fined for each failure to report. A fire alarm telegraph system, invented by Charles E. Carpenter, a veteran fireman, was installed in 1860, connecting signal boxes with bells located in the fire stations, the Gardner T. Swarts tower on Dorrance Street and several churches. In that year the mechanical equipment comprised three steam fire engines and seven hand-engines, beside hooks, ladders, buckets, *et cetera*.¹⁶

In order to provide adequately for the increased size of vessels engaged in coastwise trade the channel of Providence river was surveyed in 1853 by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and subsequently was dredged, south of Fox Point, to a depth of ten feet and a width of 100 feet. In 1867 the depth was increased to twelve feet and the anchorage basin was enlarged. The improved channel facilities proved a stimulus to steamboat traffic and a good-sized fleet made regular runs from Providence to Nayatt, Warren, Bristol, Fall River, and Newport, as well as excursion trips to shore resorts at Rocky Point, Warwick Neck, Field's Point, Mount Hope, Portsmouth Grove, Smith's Palace, Walnut Grove, Vue de l'Eau, and Block Island.

An act in relation to the "laying out, enlarging, straightening or otherwise altering the streets in the city of Providence" was passed by the General Assembly in 1854 providing for the creation of a commission of estimate and assessment to determine the amount of damages to pay property owners, or the amount of benefits to assess them, when highway changes were anticipated. Under authority of that act the city embarked upon a major

15. See page 87. The companies and their locations were as follows: *Hydraulion No. 1*, Exchange Street; *Hydraulion No. 2*, Haymarket Street; *Eagle*, High (Westminster) Street near Valley; *Niagara*, North Main Street north of Mill; *Gazelle*, Transit Street; *Fire King*, Summer Street; *Water Witch*, Benefit Street, south of College; *Ocean*, Richmond Street; *What Cheer*, Benefit Street opposite Arnold; *Express*, Carpenter Street; *Hope*, Coddington Street; and *Pioneer*, South Main Street.

16. Greene, p. 122.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

highway improvement program. The two highways flanking Providence river — South Water and Dyer streets — were each widened to 40 feet (illustration, page 120); the Dyer Street project involved its extension northerly across the former Long Wharf to absorb West Water Street, and included the removal of the eastern end of the Union Bank Building on Market (Westminster) Street.¹⁷ In 1855 Dorrance Street (page 92) was extended from Weybosset Street to Exchange Place and North Main Street was widened to 60 feet from Market Square to Smith Street.¹⁸ Washington Street was extended westward to Knight Street in 1858. Broadway was improved, and became the city's broadest highway, 80 feet in width; it was laid out originally about the year 1834 from Sabin Street to Dean Street and later extended to Olneyville.

The Board of Aldermen, in 1857, adopted rules and regulations with respect to garbage removal, under which licenses were granted for the collection of garbage to be fed to swine outside the city limits. Water-tight carts were specified for this purpose, each marked "swill cart," and collections were required from every house twice a week in winter and every day in summer.¹⁹

By the middle of the century the Greek revival in architecture had waned and designers were receiving their inspiration from elements of the English Gothic, Romanesque and Italian Renaissance.

The business buildings, as a rule, reflected Italian precedent, their facades composed of moulded belt courses, ornamental cornices and large windows capped with pediments. Some were brick with brownstone trimming; others had all-brownstone fronts. Of the latter the only survivals in 1956 were the Bank of North America Building (Thomas A. Tefft, architect, illustration, page 129) at 50 Weybosset Street, its first story replaced with show windows, and the Merchants Bank Building²⁰ (Morse and Hall, architects, illustration, page 183) at 32 Westminster Street. Arnold Block (N. B. Schubarth, architect, 1855) at 54 North Main Street was demolished in 1913 for the extension of Waterman Street (page 215). Perhaps the most imposing brownstone front was that of What Cheer Block (illustration, page 133), in a conspicuous location at 20 Market Square, designed by C. G. and J. R. Hall and erected in 1850 on the site of Manufacturers Hotel (page 48). The five-story facade was ornamented with rusticated quoins and voussoirs and honeycombed piers. A passage through the building, with a segmental-arched entrance, led through the first story, providing access to an office building erected by the Providence Gas Company in 1856 (Thomas A. Tefft, architect). What Cheer Block later was altered by the addition of copper bay windows and a classic entrance. It was re-named Providence Washington Building and occupied by that insurance company 1875-1949.²¹

The Providence Institution for Savings (incorporated 1819) erected a small building with granite walls on South Main Street, adjacent to Providence Bank (page 51), in 1854

17. *A Plat of the Extension of Dyer Street*, surveyed and platted March 28, 1848, by Atwater and Schubarth. See also pages 72, 92.

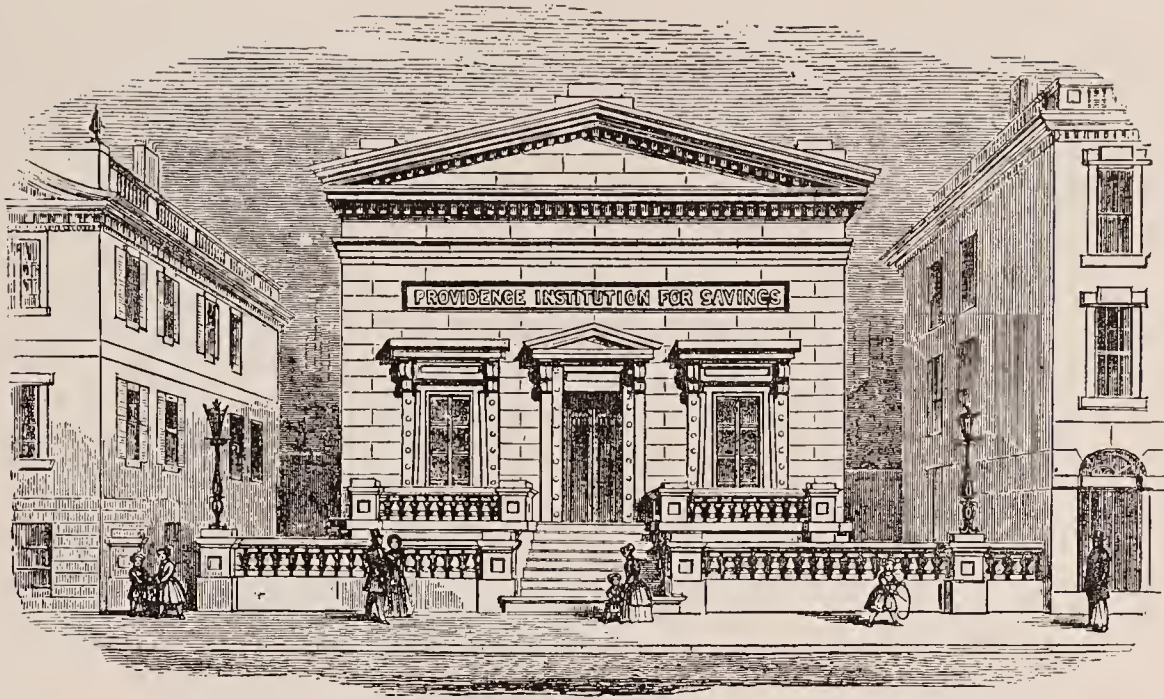
18. Commenting on the advantages to the city of the 1854 highway act Mayor Doyle reported, in his inaugural address in 1872, that "there are upwards of forty more stores rented [on North Main Street] than before the widening, while the numerous fine blocks which have been built and the enhanced value given to property on the street already yield an increased annual return to the city treasury in taxation."

19. *C.D. No. 4*, 1866-67.

20. Known in 1956 as the Citizens Bank Building.

21. The Providence Gas Company Building and the Providence Washington Building were acquired by the Rhode Island School of Design. The former was used for school purposes and later was razed. The latter was demolished in 1955 and a parking lot established on the site.

1845 - 1860



From Greene's Providence Plantations

Providence Institution for Savings, 1854, 86 South Main Street. Joseph Brown house (1774) at left; Rufus Greene house (1828-1898) at right.



R.I.H.S.

Providence Institution for Savings as enlarged 1898.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

(C. G. and J. R. Hall, architects, illustration, page 125). It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1898 (page 188), retaining at its north end a part of the original block, including one window, and a balcony below it, which served as a motive for the new design. The Institution for Savings is popularly known as the Old Stone Bank.

The Franklin Lyceum, founded in 1831 for the encouragement of literary pursuits, erected the Lyceum Building at 92 Westminster Street in 1858. The four-story facade was ornamental cast iron, its arched windows similar in treatment to the Granite Block on Market Square (page 91). In a niche in the center stood a statue of Benjamin Franklin. The building was razed in 1926 and was replaced by the Providence National Bank Building (page 247).

The Italian Renaissance style was followed in some of the larger dwellings of the period. The Tully D. Bowen house (1853) at 389 Benefit Street, designed by Tefft, is a three-story block of brownstone, one of the few surviving brownstone residences in Providence, now converted into apartments. The Thomas Hoppin house at 383 Benefit Street (Alpheus C. Morse, architect, c. 1853) is brick, three stories, with brownstone trimmings, its design suggestive of contemporary London mansions (illustration, page 140). It is now used for business purposes. Less academic than either was the Seth Adams house (c. 1855) at 51 Prospect Street, designed by Richard Upjohn of New York; its four-story brick tower was a conspicuous feature of the East Side skyline until the dwelling was demolished in 1942.

Several suburban houses were erected during this period, in a section of North Providence which subsequently, in 1874, was re-annexed to Providence (page 149). Two of these, located on the north side of Eaton Street, were on the adjoining estates of William M. Bailey and George M. Bradley comprising, respectively, 23 and 63 acres. The two asymmetric stone houses of the Italian villa type, each with a tower, set well back from the highway, were still standing 1950, the Bailey estate having become the House of the Good Shepherd and the Bradley estate a unit of Providence College (page 225). On a 23-acre estate on the Powder Mill Turnpike (Smith Street) William Grosvenor erected an ornate brick and brownstone mansion, later covered with stucco. He purchased the Seth Adams house in the early seventies and sold his North Providence estate to the Academy of the Sacred Heart, under whose ownership extensive alterations were made.

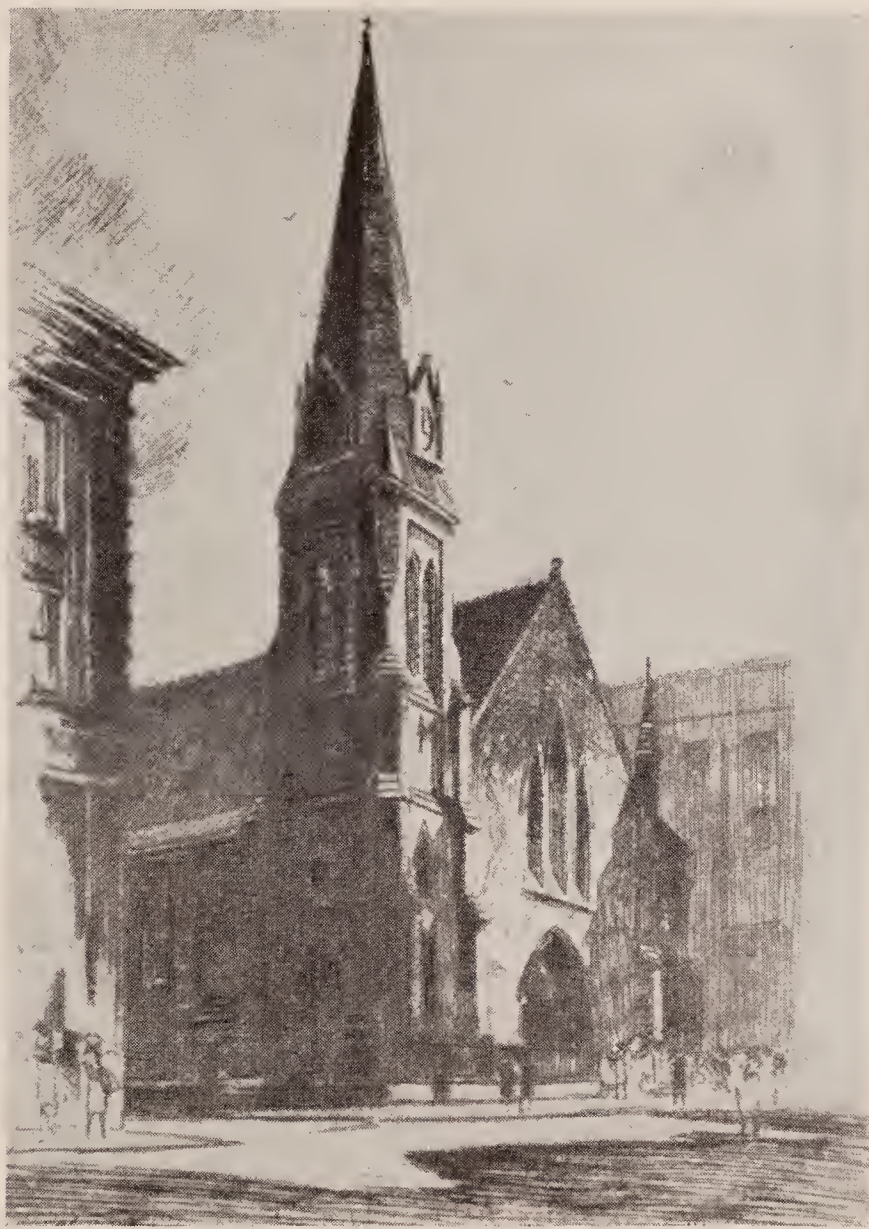
Among the earlier multiple dwellings of Providence were Dyer Block (c. 1845, illustration, page 153) on Broad Street (now 211-219 Weybosset) and Brown and Ives Block (c. 1850) at 257-267 Benefit Street. Both are brick, four stories high, the former now greatly altered and used for business purposes and the latter, with its attractive Ionic entrance porches, fitted for apartments and known later as Athenæum Row.

The outstanding example of Ecclesiastical Gothic of the period was Grace Church (illustration, page 128), designed by Richard Upjohn and erected 1845-46 on the site of the former edifice which originally had been Providence Theatre (page 111). The exterior is brownstone, its buttressed walls pierced by pointed windows, and the tower is located at the corner, providing the first asymmetrical church composition in Providence. The nave is arcaded in the 14th century English manner and is crowned by an elaborate trussed roof. The spire was built over the corner tower in 1860, in which chimes were installed, consisting of 16 bells, on each of which were inscribed the names of the donors. A chapel was erected at the rear of the church in 1857, reconstructed in 1892, and removed in 1912 when a new chancel and parish house were built, designed by Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson of Boston.²²

22. Henry Barrett Huntington, *A History of Grace Church*, pp. 56, 77, 118, 153, 214. The parish house was altered and enlarged in 1950 (Harkness and Geddes, architects).

1845 - 1860

Stewart Street Baptist Church (now Second Free Will Baptist) was erected at the corner of Stewart and Pine streets in 1852 with funds provided by Perry Davis. It is a brick building with large, square towers flanking the gable roof, and Romanesque windows. Mr. Davis was founder of Perry Davis and Company, manufacturers of "pain killer"; its office building on High (Westminster) Street, west of Franklin Street, was a landmark for many years.



Courtesy of Grace Church

Grace Church, 1846, Westminster and Mathewson streets, from an engraving by Albert R. Thayer in the church office.

Thomas A. Tefft designed two churches in the Romanesque style, namely, the Central Congregational on Benefit Street in 1853 and the Central Baptist on Broad (Weybosset) Street in 1856 (page 75). The pedimented facade of the brownstone Congregational Church (illustration, page 128), was flanked by two graceful towers, each with lancet windows in the walls and crowned by hipped roofs with diagonal faces; the auditorium originally extended from the ground floor to the roof rafters, with galleries on three sides. The building, now a part of the Rhode Island School of Design and known as Memorial Hall, has been considerably altered in the interior (page 207); the towers were taken down in 1950. In the



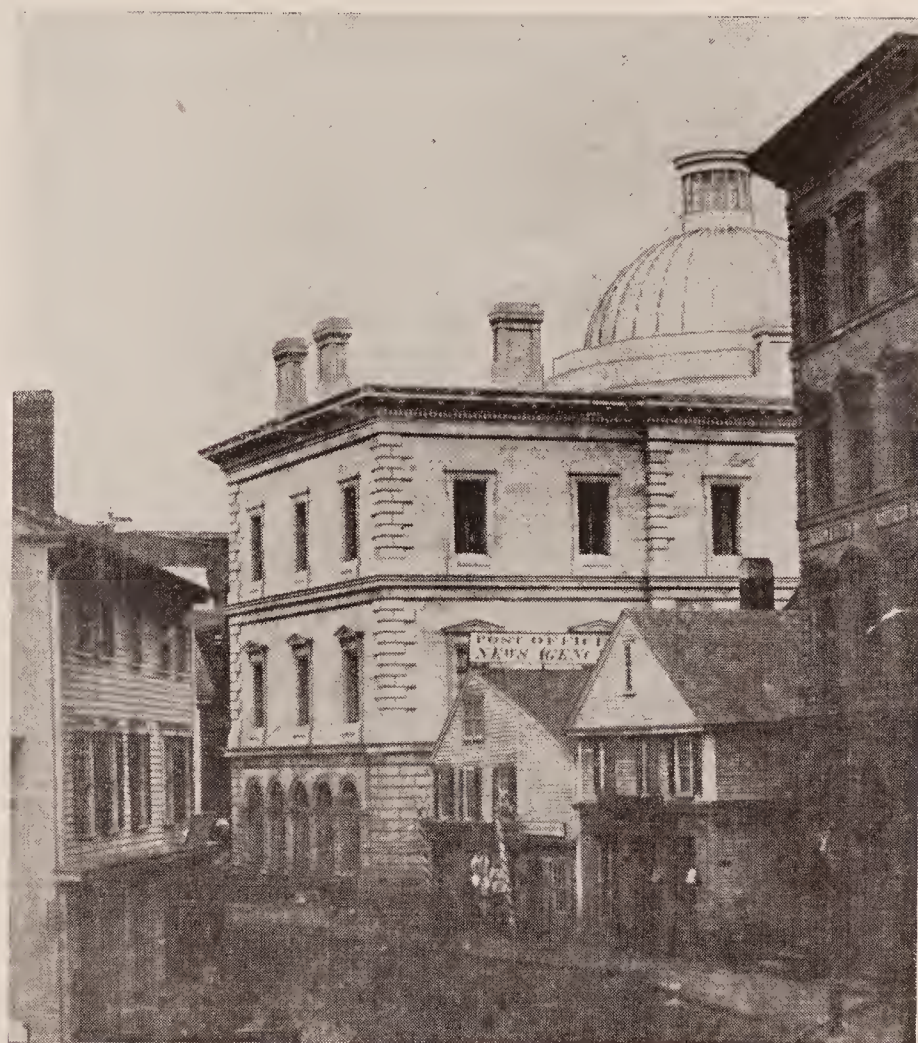
View of College and Benefit streets showing Central Congregational Church, c. 1853 (Memorial Hall) and Truman Beckwith house, 1827.

R.I.H.S.

1845 - 1860

design of the Central Baptist Church Tefft adopted the corner tower motive introduced by Upjohn, and made extensive use of ornamental brickwork. The building was removed in 1915 when Empire Street was constructed (page 215).

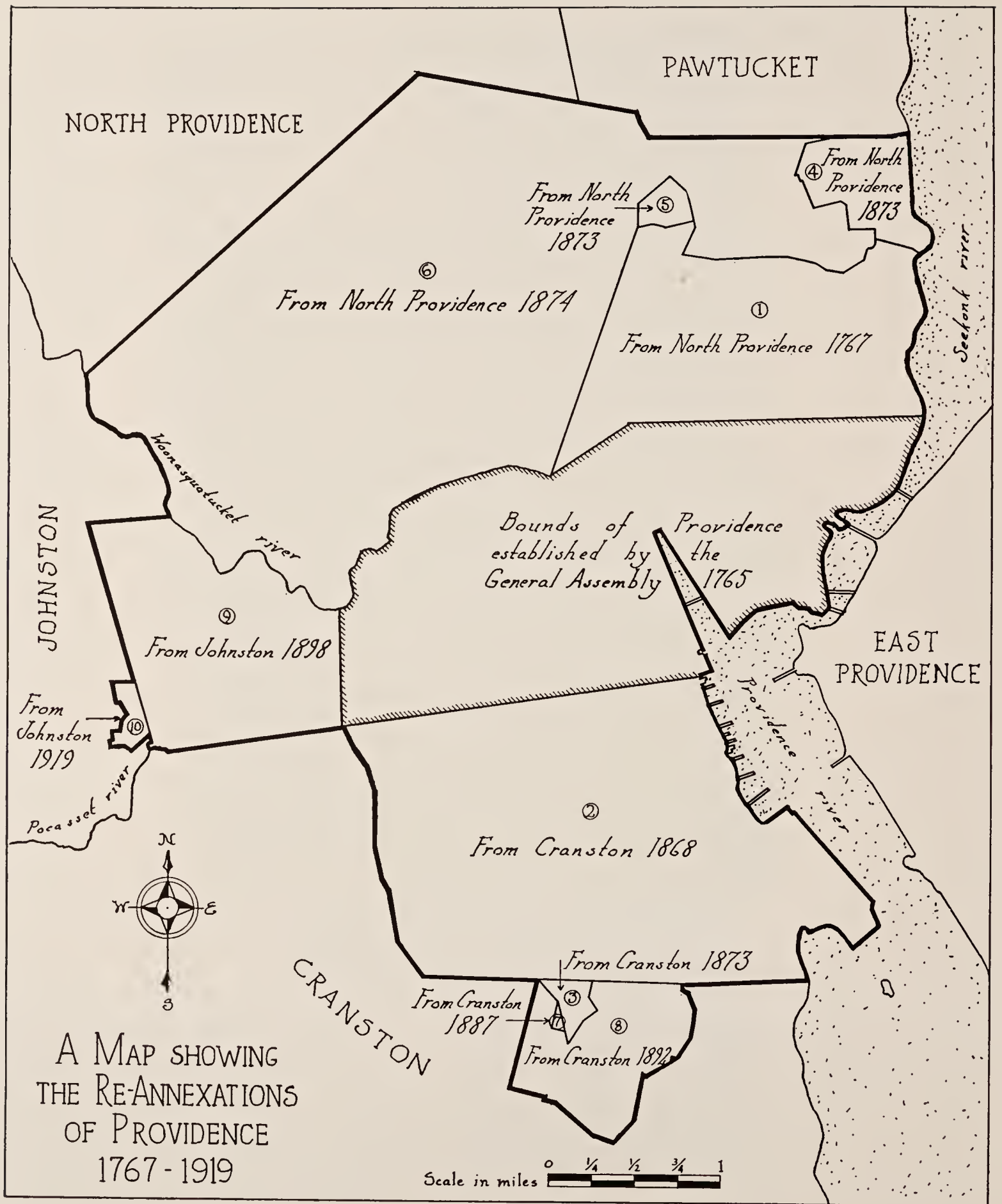
Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, erected in 1853 on the site of the former Arnold family burial ground at the corner of Hope and Arnold streets, was badly damaged by fire a few years later. It was rebuilt in the English Gothic style (P. C. Keeley, architect), with walls of granite and a central portal, crowned by a tower, in which a chime of four bells was installed in 1890.



From an anonymous photograph c. 1860

Federal Building, 1856, Weybosset Street, showing Bank of North America Building (c. 1855) at extreme right.

The most important public building of the middle century was the Federal Building (illustration above), designed by Ammi D. Young, supervising architect of the United States Treasury Department, for a post office and custom house. It is a three-story granite block in the Italian Renaissance style, its roof crowned by a dome and lantern, erected in 1857 on Weybosset Street at the corner of Long Wharf (Custom House) Street. The custom house previously had been on South Main Street (page 57) and the post office, shifted during the years from one spot to another, had most recently been located in What Cheer Block (page 124). Both departments were maintained in the Weybosset Street building until the present Federal Building was erected on Exchange Place in 1908 (page 201).



CHAPTER 12 1860 - 1870

THE bombardment of Fort Sumter, near Charleston, South Carolina, by Confederate forces April 12, 1861, inaugurated the Civil War. Three days later President Lincoln sent out a call for 75,000 Federal troops and on April 18th the first detachment of Rhode Island volunteers, armed and equipped, left for Washington under command of Colonel Ambrose E. Burnside. On June 8 Governor William Sprague called for volunteers for a regiment of infantry and a battery of artillery, and those units were soon organized and encamped on Dexter Training Ground (page 92). During the four years of war Rhode Island contributed over 24,000 men comprising, in all, eight regiments of infantry, three regiments and one squadron of cavalry, three regiments of heavy artillery, one regiment and two batteries of light artillery, and one company of hospital guards. The Burnside Rifle Company, the Providence Tool Company, and the Builders Iron Foundry¹ manufactured rifles and cannon for the Federal troops and uniforms were made by Providence tailors from cloth made in Rhode Island mills. Hostilities ended with the surrender of General Lee to General Grant at Richmond, Virginia, April 9, 1865.

A readjustment of the state boundary was effected by the State of Rhode Island and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1862, whereby a portion of Fall River, which had been set off from Tiverton in 1856, was ceded to Massachusetts, and the territory on the east bank of Seekonk river, extending easterly to Ten Mile and Runnins rivers, was annexed to Rhode Island.² The latter territory included a portion of Seekonk (set off from Rehoboth, Massachusetts in 1812), which was incorporated as East Providence, and the town of Pawtucket (taken from Seekonk in 1828) adjoining it on the north. The village of Pawtucket, located on the west bank of Seekonk and Blackstone rivers, was at that time a part of North Providence, from which it subsequently was set off in 1874 (page 149) and united with the town annexed from Massachusetts.

In 1864 Thomas A. Doyle was elected mayor of Providence, an office held, with two interruptions, until his death in 1886. One of his initial activities was a reorganization of the police department, effected by passage of an ordinance which placed the department under control of a city marshal with a staff consisting of a captain of police, a superintendent of lights, and a superintendent of hacks.³ The police force, under Captain Thomas W. Hart, was divided into five districts with headquarters in the First District Station, a building erected in 1861 at the corner of Canal and Haymarket streets on the site of the former

1. Providence Tool Company, founded 1844, occupied a building on Wickenden Street east of Point Street Bridge; it was reorganized as Rhode Island Tool Company, in 1833, and is still in operation at 148 West River Street. Burnside Rifle Works was established in 1862, near the corner of Valley and Hemlock streets; it was reorganized as the Rhode Island Locomotive Works in 1865 and suspended operations about 1890. Builders Iron Foundry was founded on Coddington Street in 1822 as High Street Furnace and was incorporated 1853; it is still in operation.

2. This exchange of territory terminated a boundary dispute of nearly 200 years' duration, the origin of which was an overlapping of bounds as defined in the Plymouth patent of 1629 and the Rhode Island charter of 1663. See page 12.

3. *C.M.*, 1865-66, p. 3.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

jail.⁴ The other stations were located, respectively, on Mill, Wickenden, Knight and Richmond streets, the latter replaced by a new building in 1867. The force included a sergeant in charge of each district and a total of 20 day and 72 night patrolmen.⁵ The office of chief of police was created in 1866, with Nelson Viall as first incumbent. The functions of the superintendent of lights (John M. Clark) included supervision of the location, construction, repairs, cleaning, and trimming of the street lamps. A total of 1,231 of these lights were in operation in 1865, about one-quarter of which were oil lamps on wood poles, and the remainder gas lights mounted on cast iron standards. The superintendent of hacks (William B. Cranston) issued licenses for the operation of hacks, omnibuses, drays, trucks and other vehicles.



R.I.H.S.

Union Railroad Depot, 1867-1897, Market Square. Washington Buildings in background.

The first street railway line in Rhode Island was the Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls Railroad, chartered in March, 1861, which commenced the operation of horse cars in May, 1864 from a terminus on Canal Street. Charters were granted to several

4. See page 95. The First District Station, a three-story brick building, was vacated on completion of the Central Police Station on Fountain Street in 1895 (page 184) and served subsequently as headquarters for the Department of Public Aid. It was razed in 1950.

5. See page 123. The former night watch was abolished under the reorganization.

1860 - 1870

independent lines in Providence which were consolidated, through the activities of William and Amasa Sprague, in the Union Railroad Company, incorporated in January, 1865. Its first horse car route was opened February 22 of that year, providing service from Market Square to Olneyville over rails laid on Westminster, High and Weybosset streets. By the latter part of that year the Broadway, Elmwood, South Providence and Cranston horse car lines were in operation and two years later the Olneyville line was extended easterly from Market Square over South Main, Wickenden and Hope streets.⁶

An ordinance was passed by the City Council December 24, 1864, regulating horse car travel. It limited speed to seven miles per hour with a special limit of five miles on principal streets. Cars going in the same direction were to be kept at least 300 feet apart; conductors were not to allow aged or infirm persons, women, or children, to enter or leave cars while



From an anonymous photograph

View of Market Square c. 1885 showing (left to right) two brownstone blocks (c. 1855-1939), Granite Block (1823-1939), What Cheer Block (1850-1955) and Market House (1773).

in motion. When highways were in condition for sleighing street railway companies were not to run snow plows except by consent of the surveyor of highways and, when required by him, sleighs were to be operated instead of cars.⁷ In winter the cars were heated by stoves and the floors were covered with straw to provide foot warmth. A pair of horses was used for each car, with an additional "hill horse" for steep grades.

6. Henry V. A. Joslin, "Street Railway Lines in Rhode Island," a chapter in William T. Davis, *The New England States* (Boston, 1897), IV, 2520.

7. *C.M.*, 1865-66, p. 110.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

Under authority of the General Assembly the Union Railroad Company erected a passenger depot in 1867, supported by piles driven in the river north of and adjacent to Weybosset Bridge (illustration, page 132). As this spot was passed by nearly all horse car routes the building provided a convenient waiting room for passengers.

Stage coaches continued in operation between Providence and communities not served by the steam or horse railroads. From a terminus at the Exchange Hotel on Washington Street (page 121) coaches carried passengers to Pawtuxet, Warwick Neck, Centredale, North Scituate, Clayville, Pascoag, Brooklyn and Putnam, Connecticut, and Framingham, Massachusetts.⁸ At the same time water transportation lines were running steamboats from Providence to Fall River, Newport, New York and Philadelphia.⁹

The Market House was remodeled in 1865 and 1866 for the exclusive use of the municipal government, and was re-christened the City Building. Previous alterations had effected various changes in the building since the erection of a third story by Saint John's Lodge of Masons in 1797 (page 50). A wing, designed by James C. Bucklin, was added to the east end in 1833 to provide an entrance and stairway to the masonic hall; in accordance with the architectural trend of the period the pilastered walls and roof balustrade of the addition followed Greek tradition. Somewhat later the first floor line was raised about three feet above the street level and a basement story was added, the latter used as a market with bulkhead entrances and steep stone steps set in the arched openings. In 1865 the basement was abandoned as a market and was remodeled for city uses.¹⁰ The City Council enacted an ordinance June 12, 1866, designating the use of certain rooms in the building; on the second floor the mayor was assigned the two southeast rooms, the city clerk the west room, and the Municipal Court the northeast room; and on the third floor the west room became the Council Chamber and the northeast room was assigned to the Board of Aldermen. In 1866 the first story was altered to provide offices for municipal departments. Installation was made of vaults for the storage of records, speaking tubes, a plumbing system, and a heating plant.

In 1867 the board of engineers abandoned the last of the hand-engines (page 123) and established a complete steam fire department comprising eight fire engines, three hook-and-ladder trucks, four hose carriages, and a force of 117 officers and men. The office of Chief Engineer Dexter Gorton was in the City Building. Two stations of the old fire companies, located, respectively, on Exchange Street and Summer Street, were continued and new stations were erected on Haymarket Street (1863), South Main Street (1866), Benevolent Street (1866), North Main and Doyle Avenue (1866), Richmond Street (1866) and Harrison Street (1866).¹¹

Water for fire-fighting purposes was stored in cisterns and reservoirs supplied from small ponds and brooks. The cisterns were built of brick, lined with cement, 75 to 100 feet in length, each divided into several compartments, with removable covers through which the hose could be dropped. They were discarded when the Providence water system was opened in 1871. In 1870 the Gamwell automatic fire alarm system was installed, including 50 street boxes and gongs for engine houses.¹²

8. Sampson, Davenport & Co., *Providence Directory*, 1870, p. 385.

9. *Ibid*, p. 382.

10. City Auditor's report, 1865-66.

11. The Exchange, Summer and Haymarket stations were vacated in 1880, the South Main "Pioneer" station in 1892 and the others in 1949-50. The Pioneer building was in commercial use in 1955 and the Benevolent Street station was altered as a library for Bryant College.

12. Report of Fire Department, 1870-71.

Pursuant to an act passed by the General Assembly in 1866,¹³ authorizing the city of Providence to convey to and through the city the waters of the Blackstone, Pawtuxet, Ten Mile, or Woonasquatucket rivers, a commission was appointed to examine into the sources of water supply. J. Herbert Shedd of Boston was retained as engineer for the project. The first report of the commission, submitted in October, 1868, was in the nature of a fact-finding survey to determine the amount of water required.¹⁴ Subsequently three alternate sources of supply were submitted by the commission, of which the Pawtuxet river was approved by the Council. Ground surveys were then undertaken by the engineer for introducing water into the city from that river above Pocasset pond, with a reservoir located on Sockanosset Hill in Cranston, 180 feet above tidewater.

Construction of the reservoir was started May 3, 1870. It was a pyriform earthwork, 860 by 1000 feet at the base, the inlet chamber at the south side and the outlet on the northeast, with a capacity of 51 million gallons. A filtration system was not at first installed, as the water commissioners had ascertained that "no city in the United States is supplied with filtered water, and no city of much size with water as pure as Pawtuxet."¹⁵ For the water works the Aldridge farm was acquired, a 96-acre estate located between Pontiac Road and Pawtuxet river. There the Pettaconsett Pumping Station was erected and equipped with steam pipes for raising the water through a force main line to Sockanosset Reservoir.¹⁶ New roads were laid out and old roads relocated in the vicinity of the pumping station and reservoir.

The water supply project was financed by a four million dollar loan, approved by the City Council May 2, 1870. By November, 1871, 30 miles of iron pipe had been laid from the reservoir to Providence; and on Thanksgiving Day, November 30 of that year, the water system was inaugurated with impressive ceremonies on Exchange Place. The first service line for consumers was opened in Providence Opera House (page 153) December 1st.

In 1868 the area of Providence was enlarged for the first time in 101 years when a portion of Cranston, aggregating 3.61 square miles, was re-annexed,¹⁷ increasing the territory of the city to 8.92 square miles. Under the city charter of 1832 Providence had been divided into six wards (page 100). Ward 6, located in the sparsely-settled western portion, had twice been divided as the population in that section increased; the area north of High (Westminster) Street was set off as Ward 7 in 1857, and the westerly parts of wards 6 and 7 became Ward 8 in 1863. The re-annexed area was identified as Ward 9; its bounds followed the railroad and Fenner (Niantic) Avenue southerly to Greenwich Street (Reservoir Avenue), turned easterly in a straight line to Narragansett bay at Montgomery Avenue, and continued to include Starve Goat Island. It included two miles of shore front, Field's Point, Robin Hill (page 52), Mashapaug, Benedict and Long ponds, Locust Grove Cemetery, five schoolhouses, and 54 miles of streets.

The General Assembly, in 1869, authorized the city of Providence to establish a park

13. P.L., 1866, chapter 640.

14. The survey showed a total of 6,981 dwellings, 1,793 stores and shops, 16 hotels, 154 restaurants and saloons, 642 offices, 657 stables, 57 greenhouses, 53 churches, 27 schools, 8 printing offices, 26 steamboats, 11 bakeries, and 14 photographers' studios. Of the 3,143 wells charted in the city 599 were found to be bad or indifferent, 356 soft, and 2,787 hard and not suitable for washing purposes.

15. Report of Water Commissioners, January, 1870.

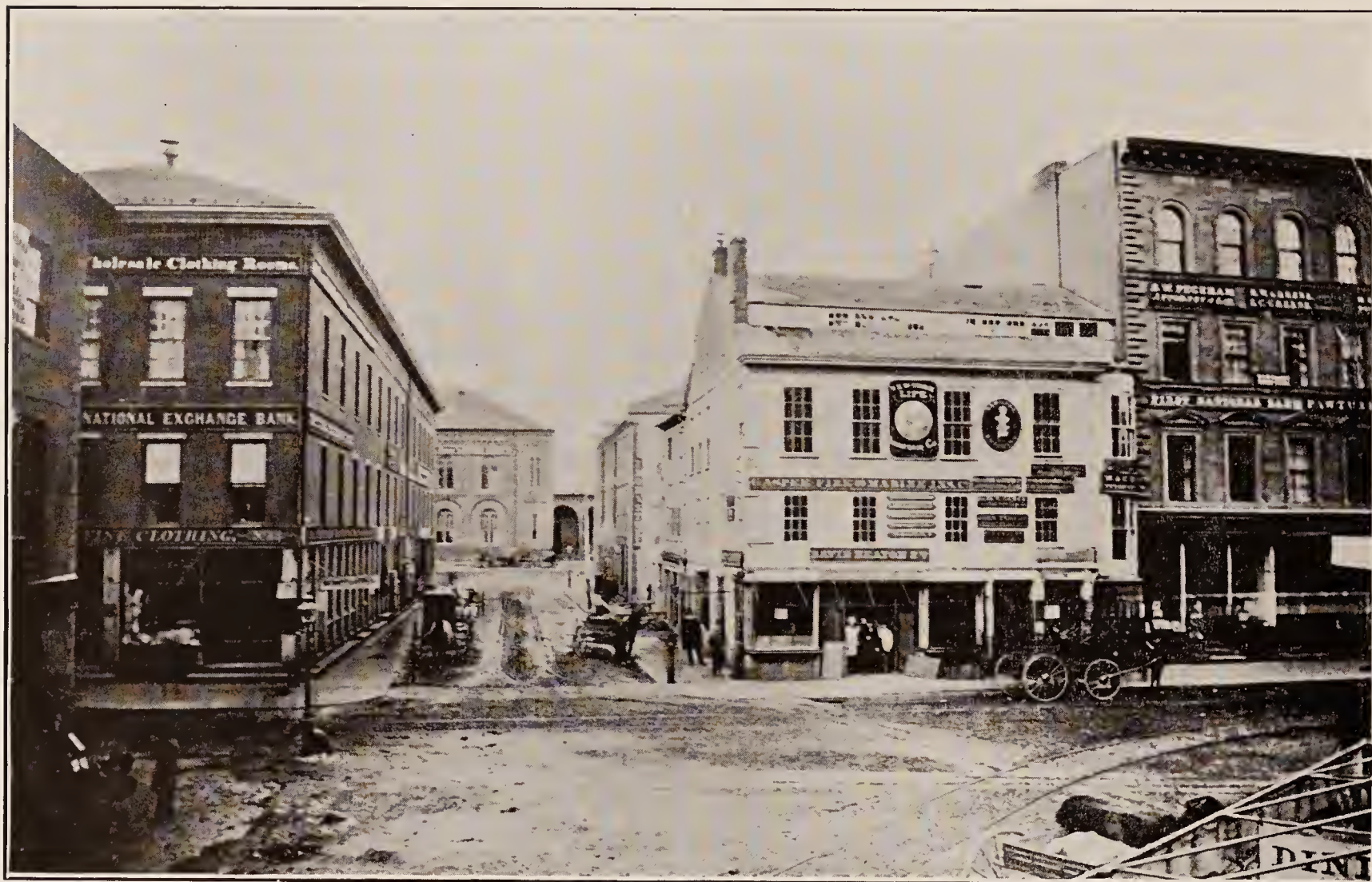
16. As an additional storage reservoir became necessary the water commissioners, in 1873, acquired a part of the Halsey estate and constructed Hope Reservoir and pumping station on an area between Hope, Olney, Brown and Barnes streets, completed in 1875.

17. A.&R., 1868, chapter 770. See page 42 and map page 130.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

at Field's Point, and commissioners were appointed by the City Council for its layout. The project was abandoned when Roger Williams Park was acquired in 1871, but the city retained the land which subsequently was developed for municipal uses (page 219).

During the sixties the filling of the cove lands (page 115) was continued (see map, page 117), leaving a canal about 80 feet wide through which Woonasquatucket river flowed into the Cove basin.¹⁸ Promenade Street was constructed along the north shore of the river,



R.I.H.S.

View north from Turks Head c. 1867 showing (left to right) Exchange Bank Building, east end of Railroad Depot (in distance), Hamilton Building (c. 1824) and Weeden Block.

west of Gaspee Street, and Park and Holden streets were built from Promenade Street to Smith. By resolution of the General Assembly in 1870 all state interest in the cove lands was conveyed to the city for the sum of \$200,000.¹⁹

Among the important street improvements carried out in the downtown area under

18. A slight readjustment of the boundary between Providence and North Providence was effected by the General Assembly to comply with the revised waterways. (A.&R., 1866, chapter 618.)

19. C.D. No. 42, 1869-70.

the highway act of 1854 (page 123) were the extension of Eddy Street²⁰ northerly from Westminster in 1867, the extension of Friendship Street from Orange to Dyer,²¹ in 1867, the extension of Fountain Street²² northeasterly to Cove (West Exchange) Street in 1870 and the widening of the east side of Weybosset Street from Harkness Court to Turks Head, in 1870.

In 1864 a theatre was erected by C. N. Harrington and R. M. Larned on land leased to them by the city. This site, where the City Hall subsequently was erected (page 150), had been acquired by purchase from Elisha Dyer, Anson K. and Alfred K. Aldrich, Thomas Brown, and the heirs of Job Compton, between 1854 and 1857, and designated the City Hall Lot. The playhouse was opened January 4, 1865, as the "City Hall" and was the scene of concerts, lectures, pantomimes, historical productions, and an occasional stage show. Charles Dickens gave a reading from his works in the hall in 1868. The building was altered and rejuvenated, in 1871, as Harrington's Opera House and was reopened by Joseph Murray in "The Sea of Ice."²³

The Immaculate Conception Church was built in an industrial section on West River Street and consecrated in 1858. A belfry and steeple rose above the front gable and a single-story vestibule projected from the facade.²⁴

A new Saint Stephen's Church was erected on George Street as successor to the original edifice of the society (page 111). The cornerstone was laid September 21, 1860 and the building, designed by Richard Upjohn, was consecrated February 27, 1862. The design is Gothic, with outside walls of Smithfield stone and brownstone trimmings, pierced by lancet windows, and a plan including a nave, choir, north and south aisles, and a Lady Chapel. Stone pillars, separating the nave from the aisles, support the roof and clerestory. The spire is a later addition, designed by Hoppin and Field.

Among other churches of that period were Roger Williams Baptist Church at Veazie Street and Woodward Road, erected 1866 and several times enlarged; and Jefferson Street Baptist Church (1868), more recently the Armenian Apostolic Church, the original steeple later replaced by a large cross.

The Home for Aged Women erected a four-story brick building at the corner of Tockwotton and East streets (now 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard, page 237) in 1864, succeeding a small wood building on the opposite side of Tockwotton Street which the Home had occupied since its establishment in 1856.

A charter incorporating Rhode Island Hospital was granted by the General Assembly in 1863 and in the same year a board of trustees was organized with Robert H. Ives as president. As a site for the building the trustees acquired from the city a tract of land on Pawtuxet Avenue (the former Pawtuxet Turnpike,²⁵ now Eddy Street) on which was

20. The section of Eddy Street between Weybosset and Westminster was then known as Pleasant Street and the northerly extension was first called Baker Street.

21. Friendship Street ran from Orange to Richmond, in 1805, and was extended southwesterly to Plain Street in 1824 and to Broad Street in 1850.

22. Fountain Street ran from Mathewson Street to Tanyard Lane (Dean Street) in 1824 and was extended to Knight Street about 1850.

23. *Providence Magazine*, October, 1916, p. 649.

24. Final services were held in the church June 2, 1957, prior to its demolition for a redevelopment project.

25. See page 84. The area had undergone considerable development over a period of 30 years. Allen's Avenue was partly laid out on filled land and in the triangle between that highway, Pawtuxet Avenue and the Cranston line (Public Street) were located the Providence Machine Company (est. 1834), the New England Screw Company (est. 1840), and the Rhode Island Bleachery Company. A number of houses were standing on Lockwood Street, including the large estate of Thomas J. Hill, owner of Hill's Wharf at the foot of Allen (Crary) Street and the Providence Machine Company.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

standing the Marine Hospital. Subsequently about two acres were donated, adjoining the city tract on the west, increasing the property to about 15 acres. The hospital was designed by Samuel Sloan of Philadelphia, in association with Alpheus C. Morse,²⁶ and was erected at a cost of \$400,000, raised by private subscriptions. The main building comprised a four-story central block, connected by corridors to two wings, each three stories high, with a projecting tower and an end-corner pavilion (illustration below). The central unit was designed for offices, operating rooms, instrument rooms, a library, museum, and chapel, and the wings for wards and rooms. The building was in the style of Italian Gothic, with



Rhode Island Hospital, 1868, Eddy Street.

R.I.H.S.

pressed brick walls over a red granite base, pointed arched windows with alternating brick and stone voussoirs, a corbeled cornice, and a hipped slated roof. The hospital was opened October 1, 1868, and was continued in use until completion of a new ten-story building in 1956 (Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott of Boston, architects).

The cause of education was stimulated in 1869 by passage of a bill by the General Assembly establishing a State Board of Education consisting of the governor, the lieutenant

26. Alpheus C. Morse (1818-93) was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and founder and first president of the Rhode Island Chapter, 1876.

1860 - 1870

governor, two members from Providence County, and one member from each of the other counties. Daniel Leach was superintendent of schools in Providence at that time with jurisdiction over the high school, nine grammar schools, and 23 primary and elementary schools. The most modern in design and equipment was Thayer Street Grammar School (illustration below), designed by Alfred Stone,²⁷ and dedicated January 2, 1868. It was a square, four-story French-roof building, having walls of pressed brick with trimmings of brownstone, sandstone and granite, and an ornamental cornice of corbeled brickwork. A bell tower originally rose above a corner pavilion.²⁸ The building was razed in 1950.



R.I.H.S.

Thayer Street Grammar School, 1868-1950.

A number of large three-story houses were built during the late fifties and the sixties reflecting the wealth and culture of their owners. These dwellings have certain charac-

27. Alfred Stone was born in East Machias, Maine, July 29, 1843 and died in Providence September 8, 1908. He received his early architectural training in Boston offices and entered the office of Alpheus C. Morse in 1859. A few years later he commenced private practice, and entered into partnership with Charles E. Carpenter of Pawtucket in 1873. Edmund R. Willson was taken into the firm in 1882. Mr. Stone was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, its secretary 1893-98, and for 13 years president of the Rhode Island Chapter.

28. Report of School Committee, 1868-70.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

teristics in common — a rectangular plan with center hall, brick walls with brownstone trimmings, large windows symmetrically spaced, heavy cornices of brownstone or wood, often ornamented with consoles and dentils, and low hipped roofs. Their differences are confined principally to the entrances, belt courses and window trimming. The entrance porches as a rule are square and in the style of one of the Roman orders, some having turned balusters both at the floor line and at the roof. The Doric order is seen at 193 Hope Street (Christopher Lippitt, c. 1857), 79 Prospect Street (Smith Owen, Alpheus C. Morse, architect, 1861), and 72 Prospect Street (William Binney, Alpheus C. Morse, architect, c. 1860, now Tuller School). The entrance is Ionic at 1 Megee Street (Zachariah Allen, c. 1868, now the Faculty Club) and the curved porch at 199 Hope Street (Governor Henry Lippitt, Henry Childs, architect, c. 1860) is Corinthian (illustration below). The steps are in straight runs, except that two-way steps curve away from the entrance at 2 Angell Street (Thomas A. Jenckes, c. 1860).

Some of the houses of the period have distinguishing characteristics. At 62 Prospect



Thomas F. Hoppin house, c. 1853, 363 Benefit Street.



Henry Lippitt house, c. 1860, 199 Hope Street.

Street (Marshall Woods, Richard Upjohn, architect, c. 1863) a driveway leads to an off-street entrance and the street facade has a full-height bow window. The house at 650 Westminster Street (Edmund Davis, c. 1860, now a warehouse) has a pair of two-story brownstone bay windows flanking the entrance, a heavy bracketed roof cornice, and a tower rising above an end projection. A large ornamental brownstone porch and round-topped mullioned windows are features at 151 Waterman Street (Thomas A. Tefft, architect, c. 1857).

It was during this period that the French or Mansard roof made its appearance. This was an adaptation of the form developed by Francois Mansard, a 17th century French architect, and provided a full story above the cornice in place of the half-story to which gabled and hipped roofs were confined. Roofs of this type rise steeply from a wide bracketed cornice and are capped by a smaller cornice with a flat tinned roof deck above it. One of the most ornate brick French roof houses was erected by B. B. Knight at the corner of Broad and Claverick streets (William R. Walker, architect, c. 1865, illustration, page 141); it was razed in 1915 and replaced by the Auto Sales Building. Another, built by General Ambrose E. Burnside (Alfred Stone, architect, c. 1865) is still standing at 314 Benefit Street;

it is brick-walled, irregular in plan, and has a curved entrance porch at the acute-angled Planet Street corner. Most French roof houses were of wood construction and many are still standing in Providence, both single and semi-detached dwellings.

Another architectural feature of the period was the cupola, placed usually in the center of the roof, the original purpose of which, according to legend, was to permit a mariner's wife to keep an eye out for the departure and return of his ship. These cupolas were either square or octagonal in form and their designs followed a considerable range in detail and embellishment.

A few houses were built in the shape of an octagon, the plan having a central hall, two square side rooms, and the others triangular in shape. These dwellings were two and three stories in height and of varying roof designs. Survivors were standing in 1956 at 241 Ives Street, 63 Elmwood Avenue and 669 Public Street.

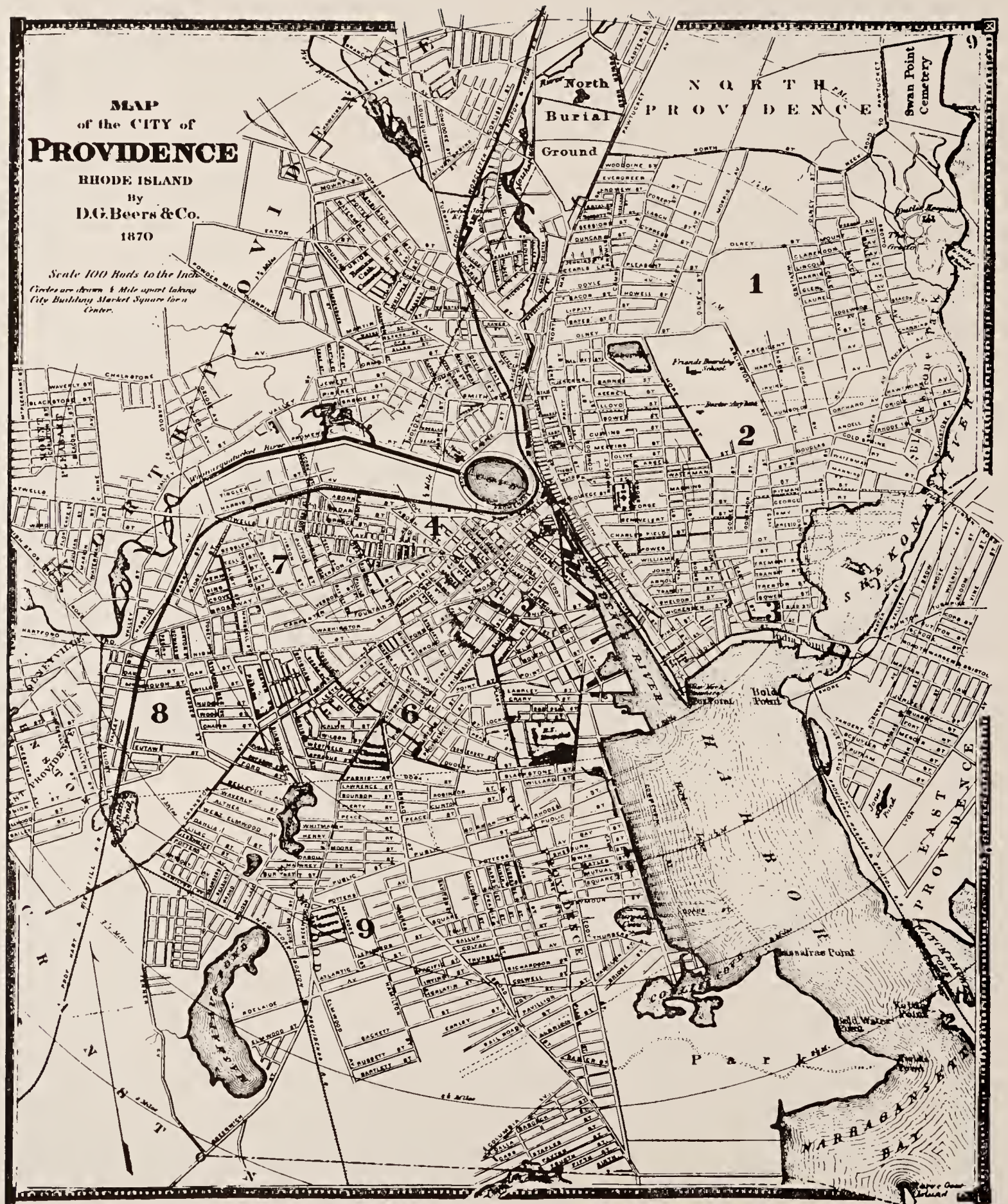


From scrapbook of Frank W. Angell

B. B. Knight house, c. 1865-1915, 159 Broad Street.

Thomas Davis erected a suburban house in 1869, designed by James C. Bucklin, on a 30-acre estate in North Providence. The walls were coursed ashlar with brownstone trimming, and the roof was composed of steep gables, crowned by a cupola. A wide central hall with an oak staircase extended from the main entrance to the service wing. The house stood on a high elevation from which a steep wooded hillside, rich in trailing arbutus, descended to Woonasquatucket valley. A stable yard, enclosed by a stone wall with a tower and gateway, stood at the rear of the house and porters' lodges were erected at the driveway entrances on Chalkstone Avenue and Valley Street. Driveways and paths were built, a stone bridge was constructed across a brook flowing through the estate, and gardens were laid out with roses, lilies of the valley, berries, fruit trees, magnolias, vegetables, and a cranberry bog.²⁹ The estate was included in the part of North Providence which was re-annexed to Providence in 1874 (page 49). It was purchased by the city, in 1891, and subsequently developed as Davis Park (page 185). The house was demolished when the Veterans' Hospital was erected on the site in 1947 (page 279).

29. Recollections by Mrs. Theodore Foster to the author in 1939.



Map of Providence, 1870, by D. G. Beers & Co.

CHAPTER 13 1870 - 1880

IT has been recorded (page 121) that the awkward street pattern of Providence is the result of arbitrary and unrestrained platting of undeveloped lands by their owners. Mayor Doyle had something to say on that subject in his inaugural address in 1872, criticizing the policy pursued by owners of real estate, "each platting his own land with reference to the number of building lots he could make on his own tract, and without the slightest reference to the direction in which his streets were laid, or whether they led into other streets platted by neighborhood owners; . . . he has realized large sums from the sale of his lands, and the city treasury must now pay to connect his streets with other streets and to widen and straighten his narrow thoroughfares." The mayor proposed that the city revise the badly-platted tracts that had been recorded but not yet developed. In the same year Charles E. Paine, city engineer since that office was created in 1869, urged the preparation of "a carefully prepared and well digested plan, making ample provision for the future with due regard to economy" and the appointment of a commission "consisting of men eminently qualified by experience, judgment and taste, and elected for a term of years, who should examine and report upon all plans that might be presented to the City Council for street improvements."¹ The recommendations of the mayor and city engineer were unheeded by a skeptical council and the city continued its haphazard growth.

In the period between 1864 and 1880 the city expended over \$1,200,000 in opening, widening and straightening highways, a considerable part of which was necessitated by the failure to plan adequately in earlier years. Among the more important projects were the widening of sections of Broad, South Main, College and Canal streets.

The more heavily traveled highways of the city were paved with cobble stones, and the others with screened gravel or macadam. Granite slabs were set in the roadways for crosswalks at street intersections, and stone gutters and curbings were laid at the sidewalks.² Of 600 miles of platted streets recorded up to 1878 about 350 miles had been officially received.³ In 1880 the highways were lighted by over 4000 public lamps, two-thirds of which were gas and the others oil.

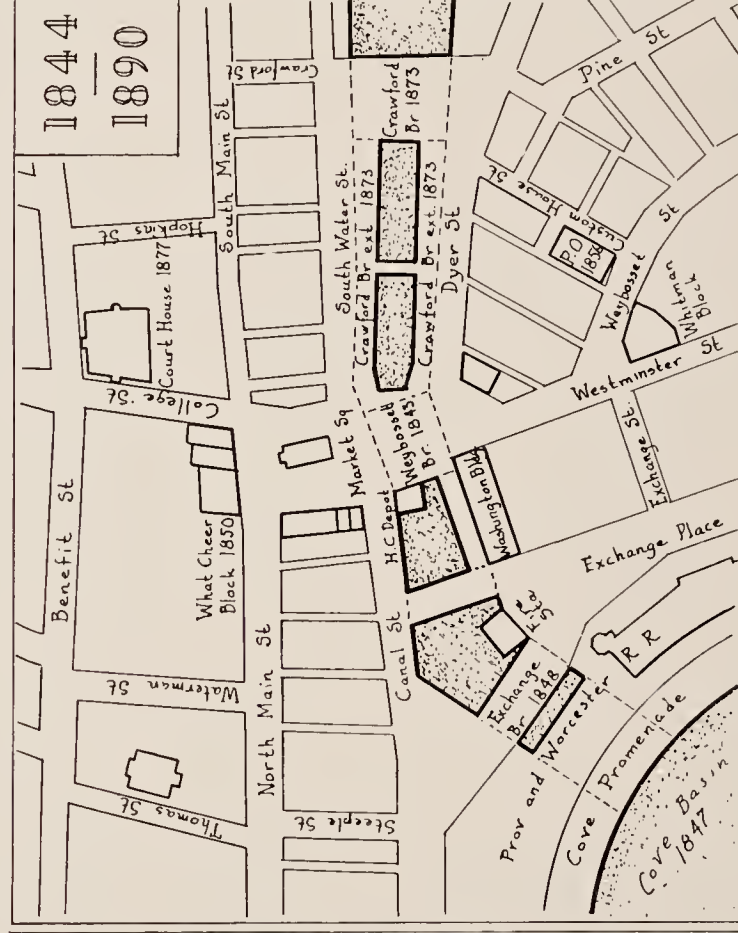
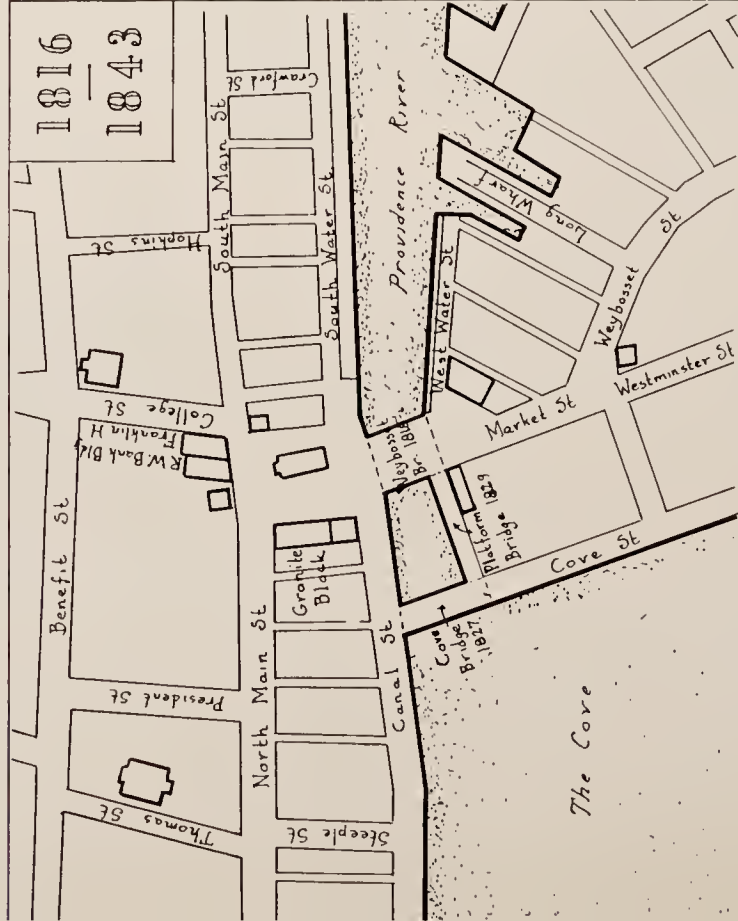
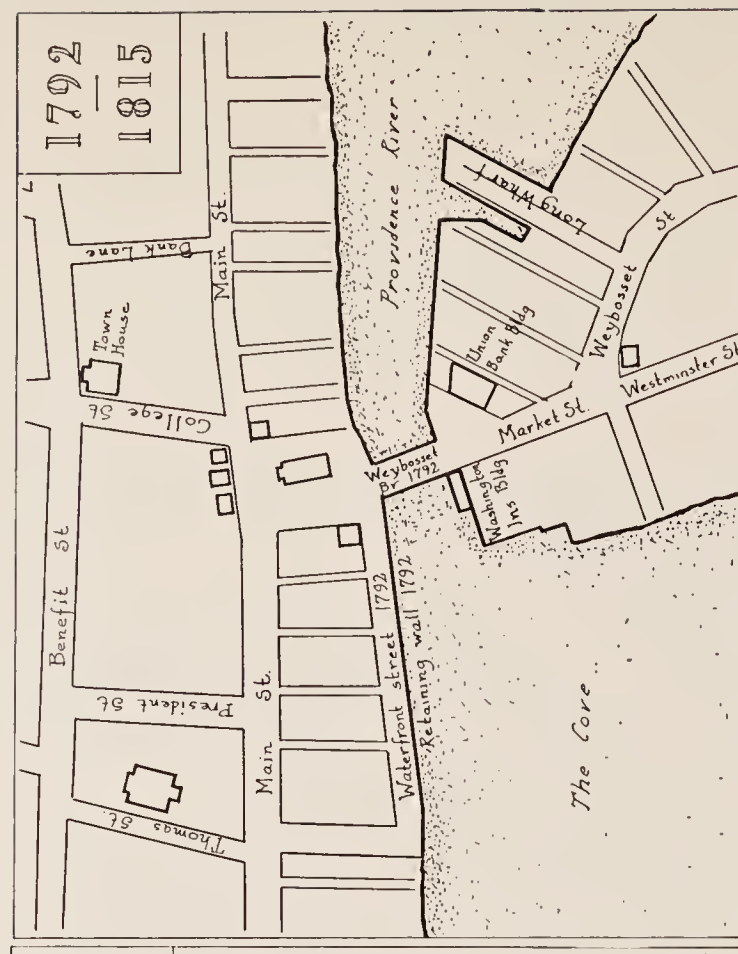
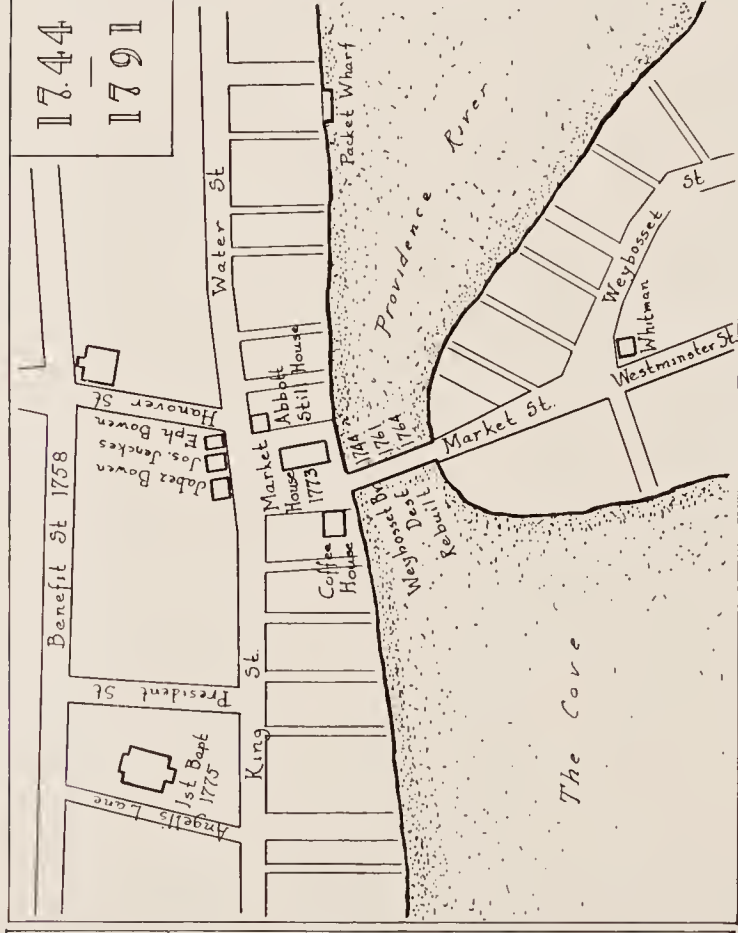
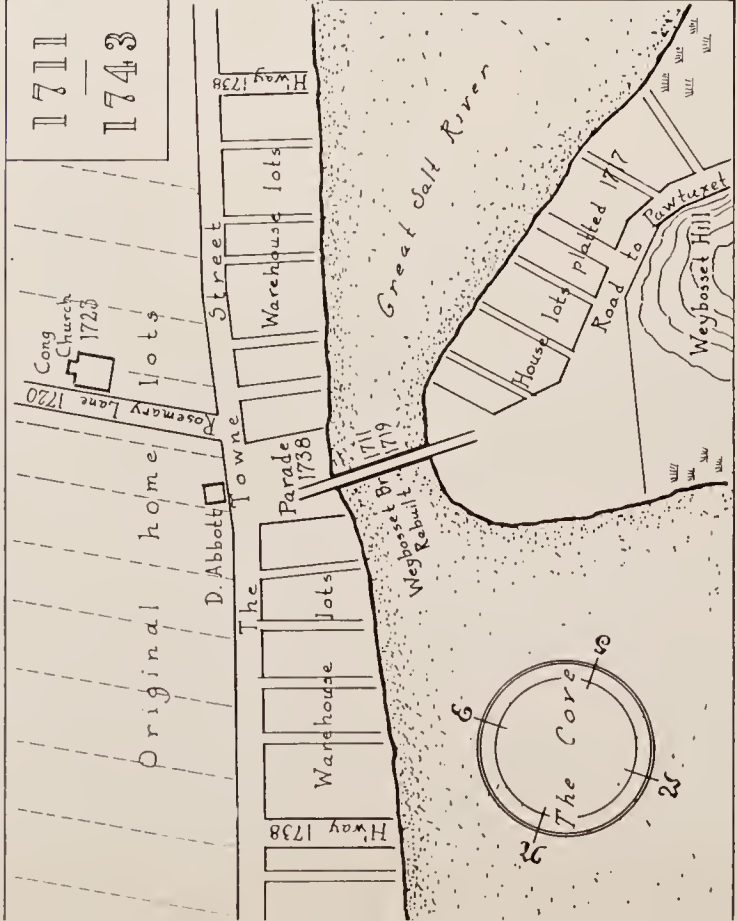
The two toll bridges spanning Seekonk river (pages 58, 83) were badly damaged in the great gale of September 8, 1869.⁴ The reconstruction of Central Bridge had been authorized by act of the General Assembly May 25 of that year and, immediately after the storm, its proprietors voted to surrender all rights in the bridge provided a new one were erected

1. C.E., Report, 1872.

2. Reports of Highway Commissioners, 1875-80.

3. C.M., 1878, p. 11.

4. Tillinghast and Mason, *The Great September Gale of Providence and Vicinity* (Providence, 1869): "Our city has again been visited by a flood and gale, outrivaling in fury and destructiveness the terrible storm of September, 1815 [page 81] . . . The water in the harbor rose to a great height, and poured over the wharves and into the streets, in the lower part of the city, with appalling swiftness. Mighty trees bent and bowed before the tempest . . . Massive buildings rocked like toys . . . Steeples rocked and fell . . . An editorial in the *Press* of Thursday says: 'The water mark in the room where we write [the site of the present Amica Building] is eighteen inches from the floor and all around are indications of a great flood, beaten in history only by Noah's celebrated deluge and the great gale of 1815!' "



Scale 0 100 200 300

WEYBOSSET BRIDGE AND VICINITY 1711-1940

Reproduced from Rhode Island History, VIII, 16

Drawn by J.H.C. 1948

at the same location.⁵ The new structure, financed jointly by the state, the city and the town of East Providence, was erected between 1870 and 1873 and was named Red Bridge. The city acquired land abutting the west end of the bridge and erected thereon a brick dwelling for the keeper of the draw. The bridge was built of iron, 30 feet wide, with a span, including the draw, of 387 feet, and was continued in use until replaced by the present Red Bridge in 1895. Extensive repairs were made to the bridge at India Point, involving the replacement of one stone pier and the strengthening of two others;⁶ this bridge had been freed of toll in 1860.

Providence river, in 1870, was spanned by four bridges, as follows: Weybosset Bridge (1843) at Market Square; Washington Bridge (1828) at the south end of the present Memorial Square; Exchange Bridge (1848) running diagonally across Memorial Square; and Park Bridge (1848) in the Cove Promenade. All were of wood construction, supported on piles, with cobblestone roadways and plank sidewalks.⁷

Legislative authority had been secured in 1868 for the erection of a fifth bridge at a point south of the Dyer Street wharves, where 200,000 persons were being transported annually in small ferryboats (page 123) and on April 26, 1869, the City Council ordered the construction of an iron drawbridge opposite the end of Point Street.⁸ Work was commenced in 1869 but replacements of faulty construction delayed its completion until October 22, 1872, when it was opened and named Point Street Bridge.⁹ The structure was 40 feet wide, with a 25-foot roadway, and was composed of two shore spans and a swing draw. From its east span the roadway was extended to South Water Street on filled land of the former Mile End cove (see map, page 10).

A committee was appointed by the City Council in 1870 to consider the erection of a public market on a fixed bridge to be erected across Providence river opposite Crawford Street and reported that "unless some active steps are taken to prevent it, this part of our river will soon be given up to old hulks and scows, and the wharves covered with ungainly wooden sheds, forming an intolerable nuisance in the center of the city."¹⁰ Authority for constructing the bridge and market was granted by the General Assembly February 24, 1871¹¹ and two years later plans were drawn by the city engineer for bridging the river between the harbor line walls from the southerly line of Crawford Street northerly to the southerly side of Weybosset Bridge, a distance of about 600 feet, and for erecting over the center of the span a public market, 60 feet wide and 400 feet long, supported on three walls built in the bed of the river. The plan was adopted by resolution of the City Council April 24, 1874 but under an amendment, passed September 7 of that year, the market was abandoned and two rows of wood piles were substituted for the longitudinal walls. The bridge was built of wood in three units, comprising a span the full river width at the Crawford Street end, and two spans extending longitudinally from the Crawford Street unit to Weybosset Bridge, and laterally from the harbor line walls to the new lines of piles. The shore spans provided increased widths for South Water and Dyer streets, leaving a river opening between the highways where the market was to have been built. Upon its completion in 1875 Crawford Bridge became the head of navigation of Providence river (see map opposite).

The only method for the disposal of city sewage up to this time was the occasional

5. *C.D. No. 16*, 1868-69.

7. *C.E.*, Report, 1872-73. See pages 95, 107 and 115.

9. *C.M.*, 1872-73, p. 37

11. *P.L.*, 1871, chapter 900, amended May 30, 1873 and February 10, 1875.

6. *Ibid.*

8. *C.D. No. 43*, 1868-69, p. 7.

10. *C.D. No. 50*, 1870-71.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

construction of drains and culverts.¹² Under provisions of an ordinance, passed July 3, 1873, the construction and maintenance of all common sewers and drains, in public streets and private property, were removed from the Board of Aldermen and delegated to the board of water commissioners. In February, 1874, Chief Engineer Shedd of the water works transmitted a preliminary report¹³ for a comprehensive sewerage system, including the conveyance of storm waters, the drainage of the subsoil and foundations of buildings, and the removal of sewage from dwellings. The drainage districts proposed, and subsequently adopted, were the two natural divisions of the city separated by Woonasquatucket and Providence rivers, and a small division between Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck rivers. Construction work was undertaken at once and, during the ensuing six years, 43 miles of sewers were constructed and 3000 private connections made, all draining into the rivers.

By act of the General Assembly March 28, 1873, the city of Providence was given power to condemn the section of the Neck south of Wickenden Street for the general purpose of re-grading and, more specifically, for leveling historic Foxes Hill (page 52), the highest point of which was at the intersection of the present George M. Cohan Boulevard and Brook Street. That street originally was the bed of a brook, into which a considerable area of the lower East Side drained, the course of which turned westward, north of Wickenden Street, to discharge into Providence river at Mile End cove. With the grading of Brook Street in 1857 the brook was confined to a roadside stream and Mile End cove was filled except for a small pond into which the brook continued to drain. One purpose of leveling Foxes Hill was to provide an outlet for the brook into the river east of Fox Point. The district, popularly known as "Corky Hill," was composed of narrow lanes and sordid tenements. Its rehabilitation was favored by Mayor Doyle as a means for opening up a valuable area for business purposes.¹⁴ A special committee of the City Council was appointed December 30, 1876, with power to condemn land in the Brook Street District, so called, and to undertake the re-grading and highway readjustment in the area south of Wickenden Street. The land condemned included about 400 acres from which 146 buildings were torn down or moved. Most of the material excavated was used for filling the western shore of Seekonk river, a project sponsored by the United States Coast Survey, permitting the construction of Gano Street and the covering of Slate Rock (see map, page 14) with 20 feet of fill. By 1880, when the project was completed, over 20 percent of the original lots had been conveyed to their former owners or were in process of conveyance.¹⁵

Prior to 1872 Providence offered little to its residents in the way of public recreational facilities. The city had acquired certain lands from time to time, mostly by gift or bequest, to be used for public purposes; with few exceptions, however, those spots were as yet undeveloped. Eleven park estates were listed in 1871¹⁶ with an aggregate area of about 60 acres, as follows:

Abbott Training Field (Abbott Park), conveyed by Daniel Abbott, 1746 (page 35).
A fountain was erected in 1875, the gift of William H. Charnley and others.

Abbott Lot at Tockwotton (part of Tockwotton Park), conveyed by Daniel Abbott, 1751 "as a watering place forever."

A lot at the corner of Atwells Avenue and Bradford Street, conveyed by Amos

12. C.M., 1871-72, p. 15.

13. C.D. No. 56, 1873-74.

14. Inaugural address, 1875. Mayor Doyle's optimism with respect to the development of the south shore of the Neck, like that of John Brown, 80 years earlier (page 61), proved to be but wishful thinking.

15. C.M., Brook Street District Reports, 1875-80.

16. C.E., Report, 1871-72.

Atwell and others, 1808, "for some public purpose or purposes, and for no other use or purpose whatever." It was named *Franklin Square* in 1857.

Dexter Training Ground, a nine-acre tract devised by Ebenezer Knight Dexter, 1824 (page 92).

A tract at India and Benefit streets, dedicated on a plat of Fox Point Association, 1830, as "a park to be kept open forever," and named *Washington Square*, 1857.

Cove Promenade Park, an 80-foot strip encircling the Cove basin, laid out 1846 and abandoned about 1890 (page 115).

What Cheer Square, a small tract bounded by Williams, Gano, Power and Roger streets, including Slate Rock, recorded on the What Cheer Estate Plat, 1848. It was accepted as a public park in 1893 and re-named Roger Williams Square.¹⁷

Blackstone Park, a five-acre estate on the shore of Seekonk river, north of Red Bridge, conveyed for a public park by William P. Vaughn and Moses B. Jenkins, 1866.¹⁸

A lot of land on the west side of Congdon Street, conveyed by Isaac Hale and other East Side residents, 1867, "to be forever a public square," first identified as Prospect Square and later changed to *Prospect Terrace*.¹⁹ Improvements to the property, including the erection of a retaining wall, were completed in 1877 (illustration, page 148) in which year a frog-and-dog fountain, given by George P. Phillips, was set up.

Elmwood Park (Columbus Park), conveyed to the town of Cranston by Joseph J. Cooke, 1864, and acquired by the city of Providence when a part of Cranston was re-annexed in 1868 (page 135).

Field's Point Farm, a 34-acre estate bordering the west shore of Providence river and including a part of Robin Hill (page 52), set aside for park purposes by authority of the General Assembly, 1869 (page 135; see map, page 142).

By a provision in the will of Betsey Williams, who died in 1871, the city was bequeathed her 100-acre estate, located partly in Providence and partly in Cranston, on condition that a monument be erected therein in memory of her ancestor, Roger Williams. The farm, originally purchased in 1662 by Joseph, youngest son of Roger Williams, extended from the Stonington Railroad to Pawtuxet (Broad) Street and comprised "wide stretches of table land, picturesque valleys, and wooded hills, intersected here and there with running brooks, and embracing within its boundaries all desired requirements for a park and resort for all seasons of the year."²⁰ The bequest included a farm house (Betsey Williams Cottage,

17. In the division of six-acre lots to the early settlers Roger Williams was allotted the tract on the shore of Seekonk river where Slate Rock was located, and named it What Cheer. In 1798 the tract was a part of Governor James Fenner's 57-acre farm which was bounded by the present Pitman and Governor streets, George M. Cohan Boulevard and Seekonk river (Chace, plate II). On June 19, 1848, the heirs of Governor Fenner recorded a plat of the farm, entitled What Cheer Estate, which established the present street pattern in that area and set aside, for public use, What Cheer Square, a tract of 40,000 square feet, containing Slate Rock, the easterly portion of which was under water. Shortly thereafter Governor and Ives streets and several cross streets were constructed. When Gano street was built on filled land in 1878 Slate Rock was left in a hollow, west of the highway, 20 feet deep. During the eighties the hollow was filled and a portion of the rock was raised and enclosed by an iron fence. Both rock and fence were removed when the present monument was erected in 1906 by the Providence Association of Merchants and Mechanics.

18. Committee on Parks, Report, 1873-74. "It is a glen, full of the most picturesque and romantic scenery, through the center of which a brook of the cleanest water winds its tortuous way. In material beauty this little park is a gem. It is to be regretted, however, that its dimensions are so attenuated."

19. *Ibid.* "Owing to its elevated position it has a magnificent outlook over the west portion of the city, but so abrupt is the side hill on which it stands that a heavy stone wall is required to support the park."

20. *Ibid.*

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illustration, page 55), erected by Nathaniel Williams in 1773, and the Williams family burial ground. The city accepted the farm as a public park by resolution of the City Council February 19, 1872, and named it Roger Williams Park. In the following year the Cranston portion of the estate was re-annexed to Providence.²¹ Improvements made to the property, soon after its acceptance, included the removal of stumps and underbrush, the dredging of a section of Mashapaug brook to open up a pond, and the layout of roads. A monument to Roger Williams, with bronze figures designed by Franklin Simmons of Rome and cast in Munich, was erected on a high bank west of the pond and dedicated August 16, 1877.²²



R.I.H.S.

Prospect Terrace, 1867, Congdon Street.

The committee on parks recommended the construction of an avenue to connect Roger Williams Park and Field's Point Farm,²³ but the project was not carried out as the proposal for a park development at Field's Point was abandoned.

North Burial Ground, established 1700 (page 19), was increased in area from time to time and, by 1870, included a total tract of 122 acres, nearly one-third of which was in the town of North Providence. Swan Point Cemetery, founded 1846 (page 119), had been

21. A.&R., 1873, chapter 315. See map, page 130.

23. C.C. Resolution No. 292, 1873.

22. C.M., 1878.

extended to include 103 acres between the Neck road and Seekonk river and 28 acres adjoining the Neck road on the west, all included within the corporate limits of North Providence. By act of the General Assembly, March 28, 1873, all of the portion of North Providence embraced within the limits of North Burial Ground and Swan Point Cemetery was re-annexed to the city of Providence.²⁴

By further act of the General Assembly in the January session, 1874, the town of North Providence, taken from Providence in 1765 (page 42), was subdivided, its southerly portion re-annexed to Providence and its easterly portion annexed to Pawtucket.²⁵ Providence thus acquired about six more square miles of territory, identified as Ward 10, which included 30 miles of streets, seven district schools, 26 manufacturing plants, and over 2000 houses.²⁶ The new bounds extended from Woonasquatucket river, north of the village of Manton, northeasterly in a straight line to Smithfield Avenue, thence on Power Road (Cemetery Street) southerly to the railroad bridge, and easterly in a straight line to Seekonk river. By the combined re-annexations from Cranston and North Providence the area of Providence was increased to 16 square miles.

Providence Gas Company, having abandoned its original plant (page 121) was now manufacturing gas in holders which had been built in various parts of the city. The largest of these, erected at the corner of Hospital and Crary streets in 1872, had a capacity of 550,000 gallons and its circular enclosure, designed by Clifton A. Hall, was an excellent example of brickwork, its plain wall surfaces broken by piers with corbeling in the frieze and cornice. The metal dome, rising above the walls, was a landmark for many years.²⁷

Exchange Place in 1870 extended from Washington Row to Dorrance Street (see map, page 117). Along its north border, following the curve of the Cove basin, stood the railroad passenger depot (page 118). Its south side was flanked by a row of business buildings. At its east end were Washington and Exchange bridges, separated by an open stretch of Providence river. And at its west end, bordering Dorrance Street, was a city-owned triangular lot and beyond it, on the opposite side of Dorrance Street, the City Hall lot on which Harrington's Opera House (page 137) was then standing. The development of this area, during the succeeding decade, marked the beginning of the present civic center.

In 1871 the Soldiers and Sailors Monument was erected on the triangular lot as a Civil War memorial.²⁸ The shaft and steps were built of granite with sculptured figures in bronze, designed by Randolph Rogers. On one face of the shaft is the inscription: "Erected by the people of Rhode Island to the memory of the brave men who died that their country might live;" bronze tablets record their names.

On the south side of Exchange Place, opposite the west wing of the passenger depot (see map, page 164) Butler Exchange was built in 1873. This building extended through to Westminster Street with an alley on either side, and was the largest private structure erected in Providence up to that period. Designed by Arthur Gilman of New York, it was four stories high to the main cornice, above which were two additional stories in a high French roof, with pavilion towers at the four corners, influenced by those of the Louvre at Paris. The walls of the two principal facades were composed of iron columns and

24. A.&R, 1873, chapter 316. See map, page 130.

25. A.&R., 1874, chapter 365. See maps, pages 69, 130.

26. C.D. No. 64, 1873-74.

27. The holders were abandoned when a production plant was erected by the Providence Gas Company at Sassafras Point in 1900. The Crary Street structure was razed in 1938.

28. See illustration, page 216. The monument was moved to the present location, in the center of the mall, in 1906.

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entablatures, enclosing closely-spaced round-topped windows (illustrations, pages 208, 216). A wide corridor extended from highway to highway through the center of the building. Butler Exchange was razed in 1925 and the Industrial Trust Building was erected on its site (page 247).

A fire station was built at the east end of Exchange Place in 1873, supported on piles set in the river between the two bridges (illustration, page 178). It was a two-story building with a French roof and tower, designed by George W. Cady, and was popularly known as the Three Ones. The first story provided quarters for Hose No. 1, Hook and Ladder No. 1 and Protective No. 1, and offices were located on the second story for the chief engineer, superintendent of lights, overseer of bridges, and the public buildings department. This building replaced the Hydraulion Fire Station (page 87); it was demolished in 1902 when a new station was erected (page 200).

A joint special committee was appointed by the City Council March 26, 1874, to procure plans and estimates for a City Hall to be erected on the lot already designated (page 137) at the west end of Exchange Place. E. L. Anthony was named advisory architect in developing preliminary floor plans and, subsequently, a competition was held for the design. A total of 21 plans were submitted and judged by the committee and its two advisors, Alpheus C. Morse and Henry Childs. The design selected was that of Samuel J. F. Thayer of Boston who described the style of the building as "Renaissance, of the character widely adopted for civic buildings in the most advanced cities of the world." The plans provided for a granite building, 133 by 158 feet in area, five stories in height, with a dome over the main entrance facing Exchange Place.²⁹ The cornerstone was laid June 24, 1875, and the building was dedicated November 14, 1878 (illustration, page 218). The old Market House on Market Square, now vacated as the City Building (page 134), was leased in 1880 to the Providence Board of Trade.

The General Assembly passed an act, March 9, 1875, to provide a Court House for Providence County to accommodate the state courts, sessions of which had been held in the State House (originally the Colony House) since its erection in 1762, and selected for a site the Town House lot (page 67) at the corner of College and Benefit streets. The design of the building, by Stone and Carpenter, followed French Gothic tradition with Lombard brick detail in the corbeled cornices. The walls were brick with brownstone trimmings and the many gables, turrets, buttresses and pointed-arched windows were blended to form an interesting hillside facade. A tower, 20 feet square, rose 125 feet above the Benefit Street entrance with clock faces set in small pediments on its four sides (illustration, page 151). The building provided quarters for the Supreme and Superior Courts, judges' chambers, offices for the attorney general and sheriffs, jury rooms and a law library. It was dedicated December 18, 1877 and after a half-century of use was razed to be superseded by the present Providence County Court House (page 239).

The city carried out an extensive school building program in the seventies. Four brick French-roof grammar schools, each with a bell tower, were erected, namely, Point Street³⁰ (1874), Oxford Street (1877), Doyle Avenue (1876) and Candace Street (1877), the first two designed by Clifton A. Hall and the others by E. L. Angell. Each of these had an auditorium on the top story. A high school was built at the corner of Summer and Pond streets (William R. Walker, architect, 1877), superseding the Benefit Street building (page

29. Joint Special Committee on City Hall, reports, Sept. 21, 1874, June 16, 1879; City Auditor's report, 1881. The top floor was remodeled in 1914 from plans by Jackson, Robertson and Adams.

30. Point Street School burned January 4, 1940 and was rebuilt.



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Superior Court House, 1877-1930, corner of Benefit and College streets.

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103). It contained nine large class rooms, each lighted by a set of mullioned windows in one wall, an auditorium, and wide corridors leading to three outside entrances. The three-story brick walls were crowned by a roof of florid design. Eleven primary schools were erected during the decade, prominent among which was Bridgham Street (1878), later converted into a trade school.

The former high school was purchased by the state for use as a normal school and was enlarged by the erection of a rear ell for laboratory and other purposes. This school, incorporated 1871 with the board of education (page 138) as trustees and J. C. Greenough as principal, was first opened in the vacated High Street Congregational Church.³¹

The English and Classical School erected a brick building on Snow Street in 1875. This private school for boys, of which William A. Mowry and Charles B. Goff were proprietors, was opened in 1864 in the Lyceum Building and had a distinguished career for over 30 years. It was merged with the University Grammar School (page 79) in 1898 as the University School, and was absorbed by Moses Brown School (page 87) in 1904.³²

Several parochial schools, maintained by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rhode Island, were in operation at this time. The earliest was Saint Xavier's Academy, established by the Sisters of Mercy at the corner of Broad and Claverick streets in 1851, followed by Saint Patrick's School on Davis Street in 1851 and the Immaculate Conception School on West River Street in 1867. The Academy of the Sacred Heart was organized in 1872 and acquired the William Grosvenor estate on Smith Street (page 126). LaSalle Academy, formerly the Christian Brothers School, was opened in 1872 in a building on Fountain Street. The others were Saint Mary's School, established 1872 at Broadway and Barton streets, and Cleary School, opened in 1879 on John Street, near Saint Joseph's Church.

Church design in the seventies usually followed either Gothic or Romanesque technique, the walls fabricated of brick with stone trimmings. Noteworthy among the brick Gothic churches were Trinity Methodist (Morse and Hall, architects, 1872) at 375 Broad Street, the First Universalist (E. L. Howland, architect, 1872) at 250 Washington Street and the Union Baptist (1876) on East Street, each with a corner spire; Hope Street Methodist (1874) at 121 Hope Street (page 121) had a steeple rising from the center of the facade; and the Union Congregational (William R. Walker, architect, 1877) on Broad Street, near Stewart, was featured by twin towers.³³

All Saints Episcopal Church at Westminster and Stewart streets (Potter of New York, architect, 1871) and the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul (P. C. Keeley, architect) are brownstone Gothic. All Saints has a large lancet window in the nave and an entrance set in the base of a corner tower from which a spire was intended to rise. The

31. The church was erected c. 1834 on High Street, opposite Summer Street, and was vacated following the merging of its society with the Richmond Street Congregational Church to form the Union Congregational Church, in 1868. It later became the Star Theatre and was destroyed by fire February 11, 1899. The Normal School occupied the Benefit Street building until 1898 when the state erected a new building for its use on Francis Street (page 194).

32. The University School occupied the Benefit Street schoolhouse vacated by the Normal School. The 1875 building was converted to business use and was remodeled following damage by fire January 22, 1956.

33. Trinity Church gave the name to Trinity Square; a large addition was built to the church on Bridgham Street in 1915. The First Universalist succeeded the earlier building on Westminster Street (page 97). The spires have been removed from the Hope Street and the Union Baptist churches; the former is occupied by the Tockwotton Branch of the Providence Public Library. The Union Congregational Church was razed about 1928.

1870 - 1880

cathedral is cruciform in plan, with two massive towers flanking a rose window; construction was started in 1878 and the edifice was consecrated in 1889 (illustration, page 176).

Saint John's Roman Catholic Church on Atwells Avenue (1871-75), with a central tower, is of Romanesque influence. So too was the twin-towered Church of the Mediator at Cranston and Burgess streets (E. L. Howland, architect, 1869), now a cold storage warehouse. Bell Street Chapel (William R. Walker, architect, 1875) was modeled after Maison Carrée at Nimes, its facade composed of a Corinthian portico over a rusticated basement.



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View east on Weybosset Street, c. 1880, showing Narragansett Hotel (1878) right and Dyer Block (c. 1880) left.

Providence Opera House was built in 1871 on the southern part of the lot bounded by Dorrance, Pine, Eddy and Weybosset streets. Narragansett Hotel was erected on the northern part seven years later (illustration above). The opera house, which soon became the city's leading theatre and so continued for 50 years, was constructed of brick with the main entrance on Dorrance Street. A short flight of steps led from the foyer to the parquet and continued to the dress circle. The stage abutted the north wall, with a green room and dressing rooms. On either side of the proscenium were three tiers of boxes. The horseshoe-shaped dress circle overlooked the parquet; above it was a gallery ("nigger heaven"), entered by a stairway from Eddy Street. The wide and comfortable seats of the auditorium, the unobstructed sight lines caused by a steep pitch of the parquet floor toward the stage, and the perfect acoustics combined to provide means for the enjoyment of plays unsurpassed by any modern theatre in Providence. The Opera House was under management of Robert

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Morrow, one-time director of Theatre Comique;³⁴ he was succeeded by Felix R. Wendelschafer who rose from the position of first violinist of the orchestra. The building was taken down in 1931 and its site used subsequently as a parking lot. Narragansett Hotel, designed by Walker and Gould and abutting the Opera House on the north, was erected in 1878. The walls, seven stories in height, were built of pressed brick with cast iron construction for the first story facades. The lower stories have been considerably altered from time to time but the building continues as one of the city's leading hotels.

For many years the principal auditorium of Providence was Infantry Hall, an assembly room 75 feet wide by 140 feet long which occupied the second story of Infantry Building, erected on South Main Street in 1879 by the First Light Infantry Regiment, a chartered command organized in 1818. The cornerstone of the building (George W. Cady, architect),



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Infantry Building, 1879-1942, South Main Street.

was laid May 12, 1879 and the hall was opened in January, 1880, with a military fair. The building was constructed of brick, its four-story facade crowned by a tower. The hall was surrounded on three sides by galleries with a stage and dressing rooms at one end, and had a seating capacity of 2000. It was used for concerts, theatricals, military activities, food shows, political rallies, banquets, dog shows, charity balls, lectures, roller polo, prize fights and other purposes. The Arion Club, a choral society led by Jules Jordan, gave its concerts in Infantry Hall with well-known soloists as assisting artists. The American Band, organized 1837 as a unit of the First Light Infantry, was frequently heard in the hall under the baton of D. W. Reeves. For a number of years Sousa's Band played there annually. The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave over 200 concerts in the hall between 1882 and

34. Theatre Comique occupied the second story of a wood building at the corner of Weybosset and Orange streets from 1874 until 1888, when it was destroyed by fire.

1926. Patti, Tetrizzini, Paderewski, Calvé, Matzenauer, Sembrich, Gadske, Schumann-Heink, Homer, Sarasate, Nordica, Melba, Hempel, Farrar, Galli-Curci, Bispham, McCormack, Hofmann, Gabrilowitsch, Grainger, Bauer, Heifetz, Kreisler, and Ysaye were among the artists who performed in the auditorium.³⁵ Three presidents — McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt and Taft — made addresses in the building. After some years of deterioration the building was destroyed by fire October 4, 1942.

A fire on September 27, 1877, originating in a building on Harkness Court, occupied by Waldron, Wightman and Company, wholesale grocers, and Charles W. Jencks and Brother, paper box manufacturers, destroyed that building as well as two business blocks on Custom House Street.³⁶ On their sites were erected, respectively, the Aldrich Building at 13 Pine Street, the Daniels Building at 26 Custom House Street, and the Vaughan Building at 17 Custom House Street, all designed by Walker and Gould.³⁷ Their walls were built of brick with granite and sandstone trim, each five stories high, in a style, typical of the period, in which piers, arches, corbeled work, pediments, and columns were used in profusion. Similar technique was employed by Stone and Carpenter in the design of Cheapside Block at 28 North Main Street. In the Wayland Building at 128 North Main Street, designed by Charles P. Hartshorn, the first use in Providence was made of cast stone ornamentation in conjunction with brickwork.³⁸ The Equitable Building at the corner of Weybosset and Custom House streets (Walker and Gould, architects) is featured by ornamental cast iron facades. Hoppin Homestead Building³⁹ at 357 Westminster Street (J. C. Bucklin, architect, 1875) has a steel frame, cast iron and glass store fronts and three stories of closely-spaced windows on the main facade. The fourth floor was designed for the use of Bryant and Stratton Business College, organized 1863 under private management (page 276). The Rhode Island School of Design occupied a part of the building 1878-1893 (page 194).

The domestic architecture of the seventies reflects the contrasting tastes of the older and more conservative families residing on the East Side and the newer families of wealth who were settling on Broadway, Elmwood Avenue and other streets on Weybosset Side. The newcomers, seeking to emulate the contemporary "villas" and "chateaux" of Newport, built their houses with an accent on flamboyance and the use of bay windows, towers, scrolls, brackets, wrought iron work, stained glass and other decorative features, with little restraint. Among surviving examples are the George W. Prentice house at 514 Broadway (illustration, page 156) with sun-bonnet gables and a tower crowned by a Chinese pagoda, and the J. B. Barnaby house at 299 Broadway with its twelve-sided tower. East Side dwellings of the period had more restraint in architectural form and detail. The George H. Corliss house, designed by its owner, at 45 Prospect Street (illustration, page 156) and the Francis W. Goddard house at 71 George Street, both red brick, have dignity and freedom from over-ornamentation. The three-story Italian facade of the former has a central Doric porch and side projections, one of which rises to a fourth story tower. The latter is an asymmetric, French-roofed dwelling, with a round-arched entrance porch on the side wall.

A building ordinance for the city of Providence, sponsored by the Rhode Island

35. *Providence Journal*, July 25, 1926. See illustration, page 154.

36. *Ibid.*, Sept. 28, 1877.

37. Aldrich Building was razed in 1940, the Daniels Building in 1957.

38. A bust of Francis Wayland, president of Brown University (1827-55) occupies a niche in the facade of the building.

39. Hoppin Homestead Building was built on the site of the Benjamin Hoppin house (page 97).

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Chapter of the American Institute of Architects,⁴⁰ became effective by act of the General Assembly in 1879.⁴¹ The only previous control over building operations was an ordinance, enacted in 1857, requiring a person intending to erect a building within ten feet of a public street to give notice of such intent to the Board of Aldermen who would, thereupon, designate an engineer to define the line of the street and report thereon to the board.⁴² This function was delegated to the city engineer in 1869. The building ordinance made various regulations with respect to the construction of buildings and established and defined bounds for a first (fire), a second, and an outer district. The chief of the fire district became *ex-officio* inspector of buildings.



George W. Prentice house, c. 1880, 514 Broadway.



George H. Corliss house, c. 1875, 45 Prospect Street.

The system of railroads was extended in the seventies by three additional lines branching from the New York, Providence and Boston Railroad. The Providence and Springfield branched westerly at Olneyville and was opened to traffic as far as Pascoag in 1873. Pawtuxet Valley Railroad, incorporated 1872 and first constructed as a branch of the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill (page 118) from Riverpoint to Hope, was later extended northerly to join the main line at Auburn. And the Warwick and Oakland Beach Railroad, constructed in 1874 with rails branching at Auburn and continuing through Cranston and Warwick, was extended in 1880 to Buttonwoods.

40. The Institute had its birth in 1856; the R. I. Chapter was organized in 1875 with Alpheus C. Morse president, Alfred Stone vice president, Charles P. Hartshorn secretary, and George C. Mason treasurer.

41. P.L., 1878, chapter 688, an act in relation to buildings in the city of Providence and for other purposes.

42. C.M., 1870-71, p. 13. Prior to 1857 the lines of highways had usually been defined by landmarks, many of which had disappeared. Permanent bound stones were set after that year and, upon establishment of the city engineer's department, plats and surveys were made, defining highway grades. The initial point for city mapping was the U. S. Coast Guard station set up at Field's Point.

Improvements to the harbor facilities of Narragansett bay and its estuaries were undertaken in 1877 under direction of harbor commissioners appointed by the General Assembly.⁴³ Providence harbor originally contained many shoals which constituted an increasing menace to navigation as larger vessels entered the waters. This condition was partly corrected by dredging operations in 1853 and 1867 (page 123). The harbor lines, established in 1815 southerly from Weybosset Bridge (page 83) were later extended, under legislative authority, by running the easterly line east from Fox Point to India Point in 1865, and north along the west shore of Seekonk river to Central Bridge in 1870, and by continuing the westerly line south to Sassafras Point in 1855 and to Field's Point in 1872. Certain revisions were made to the harbor lines between Crawford and Point Street bridges in 1879.⁴⁴ The first important project of the harbor commissioners was the dredging of a channel, 17 feet deep at mean high water, extending from Crawford Street Bridge to deep water in the bay, completed in 1880 by means of funds appropriated by the Congress.

This was an era of steamboats. From docks on the south shore of the Neck, between Fox Point and India Point, passengers and freight were transported to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Norfolk, and a fleet of boats was sailed, from docks below Crawford Bridge, to places on Narragansett bay.

Regular trips to New York were inaugurated by the Rhode Island and New York Steamboat Company in 1822 (page 85), followed shortly afterward by the operation of several independent lines. After the opening of the Boston and Providence Railroad in 1835 (page 104) the Boston and New York Transportation Company ran the steamboats *Boston* (1831), *Providence* (1832), *President* (1829), *Benjamin Franklin* (1828), *Massachusetts* (1836), *Rhode Island* (1836) and *Narragansett* (1836) from the railroad docks on India Street. Another boat, the *John W. Richmond*, was built at Eddy's Point in 1837 by the Atlantic Steamboat Company for trips to New York. The patronage of steamboats out of Providence was reduced upon the inauguration of a line from Stonington to New York in 1837 and the Fall River Line in 1847. Business was revived, however, in 1851, when the Continental Steamboat Company acquired the Fox Point wharf and commenced regular sailings to New York; the line was sold to the Neptune Steamboat Company in 1864 and was merged with the Stonington Line in 1866 as the Merchants Steamship Company. This was succeeded, the following year by the Providence and New York Steamship Company which was consolidated with the Stonington Steamship Company in 1875 as the Providence and Stonington Steamship Company. Included in its fleet were four "palace" steamers, the *Rhode Island* (1873) and *Massachusetts* (1877) on the Providence run and the *Narragansett* (1869) and *Stonington* (1869) on the Stonington run.⁴⁵

The Empire Line of steamboats to Philadelphia was established, in 1866, with the Providence terminal at the Boston and Providence Railroad dock on India Street. This became the Keystone Line in 1870 and Winsor's Line in 1872. The Boston and Philadelphia Steamship Company, owner of this line, removed the terminal to Ives Wharf in 1875.

The Merchants and Miners Transportation Company opened the Providence, Norfolk and Baltimore Steamship Line, in 1873, with sailings from Lonsdale Wharf on India Street (illustration, page 106), at the foot of Hope Street. Among the fleet of steamers were the *Blackstone*, *McClellan*, and *William Kennedy*.

The steamboat line between Providence and Fall River, organized by the Fall River

43. Field, I, 385.

44. P.L., 1878, chapter 696, amended 1879.

45. Field, II, 520.

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Iron Works in 1827 (page 85), continued operations under the same ownership from its dock on South Water Street. Its principal boats were the *Bradford Durfee* (1845) and *Richard Borden* (1874), the latter a "double-ender."

Steamboat service between Providence and Newport, inaugurated in 1822 on the New York run, was continued, with occasional interruptions, by various companies. In 1865 the American Steamboat Company was organized and operated steamboats to Newport from a wharf on Dyer Street. The line was succeeded by the Continental Steamboat Company, in 1878, with the inclusion of Rocky Point,⁴⁶ Conanicut Park and other bay ports in its itinerary. Among the steamboats were the *Crystal Wave* (1875), *City of Newport* (1863), *Bay Queen* (1865), *Day Star* (1873), and *What Cheer* (1867).⁴⁷

46. Rocky Point, a resort on the east shore of Warwick Neck, was acquired by the American Steamboat Company in 1869 and developed as an amusement park. It was noted for its shore dinners which for many years were managed by Randall A. Harrington. The park dining hall and other buildings were destroyed by the 1938 hurricane (page 270), and were rebuilt and reopened in 1948.

47. The *What Cheer*, one of the smaller paddle-wheelers, carried the figure of a little Indian above the pilot house.



R.I.H.S.

A Narragansett bay steamboat.

CHAPTER 14 1880 - 1890

THE introduction of telegraph, telephone, and electric lighting systems was the prelude to modern civic development. The first telegraph line out of Providence was run to Worcester, Massachusetts, connecting with a line from Boston to New York, in 1848, four years after Samuel F. B. Morse established the first telegraph line in the United States.¹ Telegraph instruments were operated in 1882 at the Union Depot, Narragansett Hotel, Butler Exchange and various railroad, steamboat and other offices.² The telephone, invented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876³ and first demonstrated at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia that year, was introduced in Providence two years later, followed by the incorporation of the Providence Telephone Company in 1879 with headquarters in Butler Exchange. Under an ordinance passed by the City Council October 1, 1881, that company was authorized "to erect poles and use and maintain thereon a line of wires and appurtenances thereto for telephone use" upon certain specified streets, and by later ordinances the system was further extended within the city. In 1882 the Rhode Island Electric Lighting Company was organized with a station located on Dyer Street, between Dorrance and Ship, and was authorized by the City Council to erect poles and wires for conducting electricity for light, heat and motive power to consumers. On August 6 of that year the committee on lamps contracted with the electric lighting company for the installation of ten arc lights, an invention of Charles F. Brush of Cleveland, Ohio, for highway lighting on Market Square and Westminster Street and by January, 1884, 40 more street lights had been put in use in the center of the city.⁴ Illumination was provided for private consumers by means of the incandescent lamp, patented in 1879 by Thomas A. Edison. In 1888 the General Assembly authorized the city of Providence to hire a sum of money to be expended for laying underground the wires belonging to the city in the fire district.⁵

As late as 1882 the system of street lighting was regulated by the moon, whose light was utilized as much as possible; if the sky was clouded on full moon nights a flag was displayed from the staff on Prospect Terrace as a signal to light.⁶ In 1887 the superintendent of lights reported a total of 4,397 street lights in use, including 2,560 gas, 1,035 naphtha, 627 gasoline, and 175 electric.

Among the many highway projects undertaken during the eighties was the widening of North Main Street where it adjoined North Burial Ground. The old road to Pawtucket and the Pawtucket Turnpike,⁷ which ran side by side northerly from the former city line at Cemetery Street, had been incorporated into a single highway in 1869-70 as far as

1. "What hath God wrought!" was the first message, telegraphed from Baltimore to Washington in 1844.

2. Moses King, *King's Pocketbook of Providence* (Cambridge, 1882), p. 110.

3. Mr. Bell was assisted in his experiments by Eli Whitney Blake, professor of Physics at Brown, who invented the Blake transformer.

4. Report of Mayor Hayward in *City Manual*, 1884.

5. P.L., 1888, chapter 670.

6. *King's Pocketbook*, p. 108.

7. See page 85. The turnpike was freed in 1869.

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Hillside Avenue, previous to its re-annexation from North Providence.⁸ In 1876 an agreement was made between the city of Providence and the Randall heirs whereby a strip of land in North Burial Ground, 115 feet wide, should be alienated from burial purposes and should be known as Randall Park, it being understood that a section thereof might be used by the city, when required, for widening North Main Street.⁹ On April 20, 1882, the Board of Aldermen authorized that project from Sexton Street to Cemetery Street, at a uniform width of 99 feet,¹⁰ by which act that section of North Main Street superseded Broadway as the city's widest thoroughfare (page 124).

Under a highway act passed by the General Assembly April 30, 1886, the commission of estimate and assessment¹¹ was abolished and the layout, widening and extension of streets was vested in the Board of Aldermen with authority, in the case of each project, to appoint three appraisers, none of whom should be interested in the land in question, to determine benefits and damages. A board of public works,¹² organized in 1880 with control over highways, waterworks and sewerage, was superseded in 1888 by the office of commissioner of public works,¹³ the first incumbent of which was John A. Coleman, appointed by the City Council in February, 1889.

Consideration was given to the safety of public buildings in 1882 by a joint special committee appointed by the City Council to examine the theatres and halls used for public gatherings with respect to strength of construction, fire hazard, means of egress and ventilation. The buildings examined were Providence Opera House (page 153), Music Hall,¹⁴ Amateur Dramatic Hall,¹⁵ Infantry Hall (page 154), Theatre Comique (page 134), Low's Opera House,¹⁶ Central Congregational Church,¹⁷ Union Congregational Church (page 152), and Beneficent Congregational Church.¹⁸ In a report made by experts retained by the committee various recommendations were made for reducing the danger in case of fire, including additional exits and stairways, exit signs, stair handrails, the fireproofing of proscenium arches and stairways, the protection of gas footlights by wire screening, and the installation of sprinklers and fire extinguishers. The owners of the buildings were notified by the committee of the specific recommendations and made general compliance with them.¹⁹

8. See page 149. This section of the highway was established at a width of 92½ feet.

9. *E.R.P.*, XVIII, 289.

10. *Ibid*, 309.

11. See page 123. Under the act of 1854 one-half the cost of each project was paid for by the city and the balance by property owners in proportion to the benefits accrued. An amended act, in 1871, reduced the city's obligation to one-fourth the cost of each project.

12. Appointed under authority of Chapter 815, *Public Laws*, April 15, 1880.

13. Appointed under authority of Chapter 677, *Public Laws*, March 23, 1888.

14. A hall used for concerts, lectures, and other purposes in a brick building on Westminster Street, opposite Aborn. The auditorium was on the second story with a main gallery around three sides and a second gallery at the rear, providing a total seating capacity of 2200. Above the stage was a Hook and Hastings concert organ. The Providence Public Market occupied the first story in 1895. The building was damaged by fire March 16, 1905 and in its reconstruction Music Hall was eliminated. The building was razed in 1955.

15. Formerly the Power Street Methodist Church (page 111) and later known as Talma Theatre.

16. Low's Grand Opera House at Westminster and Union streets was built in 1877 as a public hall and was remodeled into a theatre the following year. The main entrance and foyer were on Union Street, opposite the stage, and overlooking the parquet was a horseshoe-shaped gallery. A new entrance and lobby were opened from Westminster Street in 1882 and a second gallery constructed, providing a total seating capacity of 1600. The name of the theatre was changed to B. F. Keith's Gaiety Opera House in 1889, Keith's New Theatre in 1912, Victory Theatre in 1919, and Empire Theatre in 1935. It was razed in 1949 (see page 285).

17. Now a part of the R. I. School of Design. See page 207.

18. See page 74. It is commonly known as the Round Top Church.

19. Report of Joint Standing Committee on Safety of Public Buildings, December 4, 1882.

The joint special committee urged the adoption of amendments to the building laws to provide for the safety of public buildings thereafter erected. Its recommendations were approved by Spencer B. Hopkins, whose election by the Council to the office of inspector of buildings followed legislative action April 10, 1883, removing the enforcement of the building laws from the fire department (page 156). It was not until 1895, however, that the desired amendments were passed by the General Assembly.²⁰

In addition to the theatres and auditoriums several places of amusement were well patronized at this period. The Park Garden, located on a 30-acre tract bounded by the present Broad, Sumter, Niagara and Sackett streets, was a summer resort, with lawns, paths, and a pavilion, that was opened in 1878 with "A Feast of Lanterns;" a production of "H. M. S. Pinafore" was given there on an artificial lake in the summer of 1879. Another summer resort, San Souci Garden, containing a theatre and shooting gallery, was on Broadway, opposite Jackson Street. Nearby, on Aborn Street, where the Manufacturers Building now stands, was Amos C. Barstow's Providence Roller Skating Rink, a large wooden building with a rink and galleries; it was destroyed by fire May 21, 1893. The Providence Base Ball Ground, home of the Providence club that won the National League championship in 1879, was at the corner of High (Westminster) and Messer streets. There were two small places of amusement on Westminster Street; the Dime Museum stood on the site of the present Albee Theatre (page 227), and Westminster Musee, later rebuilt as Westminster Theatre (page 203) was a short distance westward.

About 200 horse cars were in operation over 41 miles of tracks in 1882. The fares, within the city limits, were six cents for adults and three cents for children. Blue uniforms were worn by conductors and gray uniforms by drivers. The routes and destinations were identified by the colors of cars and signal lights, as follows:²¹

Broad Street to Pawtuxet, maroon, purple lights.

Broadway to Olneyville, blue and white, blue lights.

Brook Street to Olneyville by way of Wickenden, South Main, Westminster and High streets, green and white, green lights.²²

Chalkstone Avenue to Mount Pleasant, drab, red and white lights.

Cranston, red and green, red and green lights.

Eddy Street to South Providence, green and red, straw lights.

Elmwood, red and white, red lights.

Governor Street to Olneyville by way of the Brook Street route from Wickenden Street westward, green and white, green lights.

North Main Street, red and white, red lights.

Pawtucket, straw, straw lights.

Plainfield Street to Johnston, green and white, green lights.

Prairie Avenue, straw, blue and white lights.

Smith's Hill and Chalkstone Avenue, red and white, red lights.

Additional routes to Camp Street and East Providence were opened about 1886.²³

The last stage coach lines to operate out of the center of the city ran, respectively, from Turks Head to Centredale, from the Arcade to East Providence, and from Shattuck's

20. *C.D. No. 8*, 1895. Provision was made, in the interim (1890), whereby fire escapes were required on certain types of buildings.

21. *King's Pocketbook*, pp. 53-57.

22. The Brook Street and Governor Street lines were opened about 1876 in which year the former Hope Street line (page 133) was discontinued.

23. Sampson, Murdock and Co., *Providence Directory*, 1886, p. 672.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

Exchange on Washington Street to Brooklyn, Connecticut.²⁴ From the horse car terminus at Olneyville stages made trips to Thornton and North Scituate, and from the end of the Governor Street line on Butler Avenue an omnibus ran to Swan Point Cemetery on summer afternoons.

The horse cars provided convenient transportation from the business center to practically all residential areas of the city except the middle section of the Neck, where the natural topography necessitated a long and circuitous routing through the Fox Point district for the Brook Street line to Hope Reservoir and the Governor Street line to the corner of Butler and Irving avenues. In order to provide a means of direct approach Walter Richmond, president of the Richmond Manufacturing Company and a resident of Waterman Street, organized the Providence Cable Tramway Company which was granted a charter in 1884. A franchise was authorized by the City Council for laying out the line from Market Square



R.I.H.S.

Cable tramway, c. 1891, from photograph presented to the R. I. Historical Society by Misses Mary B. and Jane L. Anthony.

to Red Bridge by way of College, Prospect, Angell, South Angell and East River streets, returning by Waterman, Prospect and College streets. Construction of the line was started in 1888 and the first cars were run early in 1890. A conduit extended the whole length of the line, a distance of about three miles, and on the road surface, between the rails, was a slot framed by two steel bars. Through the conduit ran an endless steel cable, operated at a speed of about seven miles per hour from a power house on South Angell Street. The cars were propelled by grip cars equipped with levers to clutch the cable.²⁵ At the westerly terminus of the line at Market Square the grip cars were disengaged and the cars were pulled by horses over the rails of the Union Railroad Company to Olneyville.

An act of the General Assembly, passed March 3, 1883, provided for clearing the channel of Seekonk river at India Point and for constructing a bridge to replace India

24. Sampson, Murdock and Co., *Providence Directory*, 1886, p. 672.

25. Albert W. Clafin, "The Providence Cable Tramway," *R. I. Hist.*, V, 41-53; VI, 11-28. See illustration above.

Bridge, erected in 1815 (pages 83, 143). Bridge commissioners were appointed under whose direction a wrought iron bridge, 1,245 feet long, designed by Theodore Cooper of New York, was constructed with a draw operated by a hydraulic pump, and was opened to traffic May 30, 1885. A year after its completion the bridge was tested by the city engineer and found defective in many respects, necessitating repairs and partial reconstruction. It was turned over to the city by the commissioners February 1, 1887, identified as Washington Bridge, and was continued in use until replaced by the present span of the same name in 1930.²⁶

A quarter-century after the construction of the Cove basin and the railroad depot (page 115) a movement was instituted by the City Council for a general reorganization of the lands previously flowed by tidewater. There followed nearly two decades of planning and surveying, of proposals and counter-proposals, before the ultimate pattern was agreed upon. A board of commissioners of the cove lands, with Mayor Doyle as chairman, submitted plans in 1873 for locating the passenger depot at a site west of the Cove Promenade and for establishing freight yards in Woonasquatucket valley.²⁷ No action was taken and the board was discharged. In 1881, pursuant to a petition from the railroads for the purchase of additional lands the mayor was authorized to appoint two commissions, one to appraise the cove lands and arrange for sales to the railroads, and the other to develop a plan for increasing the terminal facilities. The commission on appraisals failed to come to terms with the railroads and the commission on terminal facilities, while agreed on filling the Cove basin, was divided in opinion with respect to the railroad layout, submitting, in 1883, both a majority and a minority report²⁸ and presenting its final report in 1886 in which it recorded its inability to agree with the railroads on any general plan.²⁹ Meanwhile, an act was passed by the General Assembly enabling the city of Providence to condemn certain lands within and adjoining the cove lands for public purposes.³⁰

In 1883 the Public Park Association was organized under the sponsorship of 200 leading citizens with William G. Mowry as president. While its ultimate purpose was the institution of a park system in the metropolitan area of Providence the association entered into the cove lands controversy and issued a series of tracts with the purpose of focusing public opinion on broader aspects of their development than those of purely utilitarian consideration. It approved the plan reported by the commissioners in 1873; it favored the retention of the Cove basin for reasons of conservation, sanitation and recreation; and it opposed the use of the basin area for railroad purposes because it was too valuable property for such use.³¹

The City Council started afresh, in 1887, by the appointment of a joint special committee on railroad terminal facilities and a commission of three expert engineers, consisting of Joseph W. Wilson, D. J. Whittemore and Alfred P. Boller. That commission presented a report in April, 1888, accompanied by maps, the features of which included the removal of the passenger depot and the rails looping around the Cove basin, the rectification of the main line tracks, the erection of a new depot on Gaspee Street near the old State Prison, the separation of freight and passenger interests, the filling of the Cove basin, and the reconversion of that area into a park which would provide an approach to the new

26. *C.M.*, 1886, p. 29; *C.E.*, reports, 1887, 1888. See page 237.

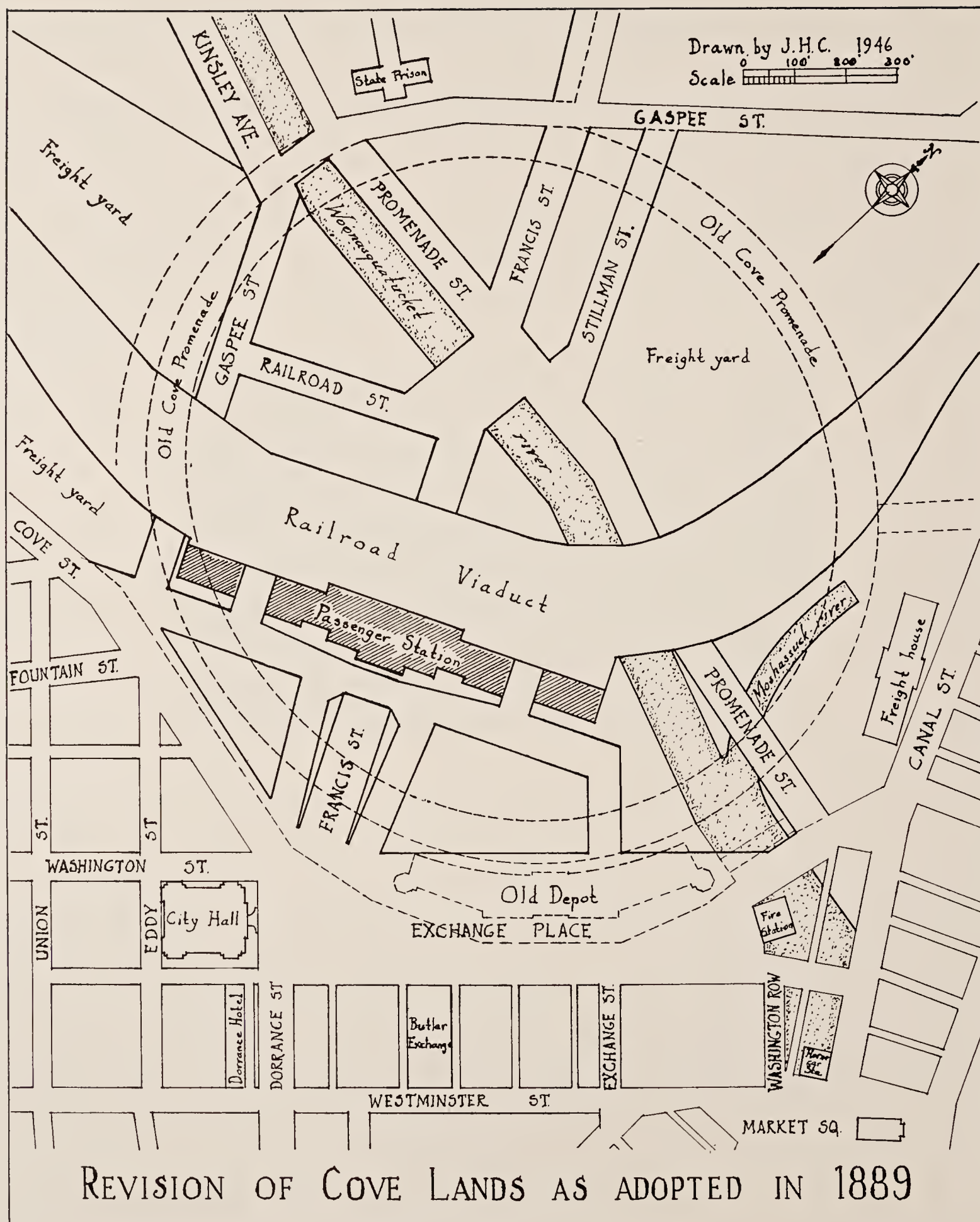
27. The tracks were to be relaid north of the Cove basin, replacing the loop around its south rim.

28. *C.D. No. 25*, 1883; *C.D. No. 26*, 1883.

29. *C.D. No. 33*, 1886.

30. *P.L.*, 1884, chapter 422.

31. Public Park Association, *Tract No. 6*, 1886.



passenger depot from Exchange Place. This report was productive of action to the extent that the City Council, with legislative authority,³² ordered the filling of the Cove basin and the erection of retaining walls for Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck rivers. The other recommendations in the report, although approved in principle by the City Council, failed to satisfy the railroads involved.

A merger was effected by the leasing of the Providence and Worcester Railroad to the Boston and Providence which, in turn was consolidated in 1888 with the Old Colony Railroad, a company which had operated in southern Massachusetts since 1844. The Old Colony, in 1889, united with the New York, Providence and Boston and the Providence and Springfield railroads in submitting to the City Council a modified plan for terminal improvements,³³ which provided a site for the passenger station about 500 feet northwest of the old depot, with the tracks, train shed and main floor of the station elevated above the streets. Numerous highway changes were proposed with three principal arteries, namely, Gaspee, Francis and Promenade streets, underpassing the tracks (see map, page 164).

This plan was opposed by the Public Park Association who objected to the designation of a large area of valuable land, west of Canal Street, for freight yards and the erection of a "Chinese wall" through the heart of the city which, it insisted, would form a barrier between the civic center and the lands to the north, connected only by long dark highway underpasses which it characterized as "rat holes."³⁴ Unmindful of the association's objection, however, the City Council adopted the plan proposed by the railroads, under provisions of which the city obligated itself to construct the new highways and bridges and the railroads agreed to build the passenger station and its approaches.³⁵

By act of the General Assembly, May 2, 1884, the city was authorized to take the land on Plain Street, known as the Proprietors' Burying Ground, for a public park. That ground, platted in 1792, was a unit in a group of independent cemeteries identified, collectively, as the West Burial Ground. Most of those cemeteries already had been vacated following the removal of interred remains to other burial places. The surviving grounds had become badly neglected and were subsequently vacated by action of the City Council under legislative authority granted in 1876.³⁶ By 1889 the last remains had been removed from the Proprietors' Ground, in which year it was improved for park purposes. It was named Hayward Park in honor of Mayor William S. Hayward (1881-84) who donated a fountain placed in the center of the area.³⁷ The park was extended southerly to Maple Street, in 1892, by purchase of a portion of the former Beneficent Burial Ground,³⁸ providing a total area of about 2½ acres.

In 1888 the General Assembly authorized the city to establish a public park in the portion of the Brook Street District (page 146) lying between Wickenden, East and India streets,³⁹ including the Reform School site (page 123) and the Abbott lot (page 146). It was accepted by the city August 8, 1888, and named Tockwotton Park. After a time the building was demolished, walks laid out, trees planted, and a pavilion built.⁴⁰ The city acquired additional land to the east in 1896, increasing the area of the park to about five acres.

32. P.L., 1888, chapter 722.

33. C.D. No. 20, 1889.

34. Public Park Association, *Tract No. 11*, 1897, pp. 77-78. The disadvantages of the plan to the city, as foretold by the Association, have been vividly demonstrated.

35. *Report of Joint Special Committee on Railroad Terminal Facilities*, November 18, 1899.

36. P.L., 1876, chapter 553.

37. Report of Committee on Parks, 1890.

38. Vacated about 1875. See page 60.

39. P.L., 1888, chapter 680.

40. The school building demolished was the former Tockwotton Hall (page 105). The park was abandoned and Fox Point Elementary School erected on the site in 1954.

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The police department, in 1886, was divided into six districts with stations located, respectively, on Canal Street (page 131), Chalkstone Avenue (1874), Wickenden Street (1875), Knight Street (1875), Plain Street (1886) and Chaffee Street, the latter acquired when a portion of North Providence was re-annexed in 1874 (page 149).⁴¹ Headquarters were established in City Hall upon completion of that building in 1878. A mounted squad was organized in 1879, its stables located adjacent to the Canal Street station. Another stable was built on Chalkstone Avenue in 1885.

The fire department, in 1886, was operating hose carts, hook-and-ladders, steamers and chemical engines, housed in 16 stations, all except seven (pages 134, 150) of which were of recent construction. These were located on Pallas Street (1872), Smith Street (1875), Wickenden Street (1875), Amherst Street (1878), Central Street (1875), Mill Street (1878), Burnside Street (1883), Public Street (1885), and Atwells Avenue (1886).⁴² About 140 fire alarm boxes were in operation, the majority set on poles at street intersections, opened by keys in custody of residents in the vicinity, and the others placed on public buildings and factories, all of which signaled the box numbers on bells in the fire station towers. The bells were used also for time signals at noon and 8:30 P.M. daily and for "no school" signals on stormy days. Horse stalls were located in the rear of the stations; their doors were opened automatically whenever the bell rang, and the well-trained horses trotted to their positions in front of the fire apparatus.

The fire department reported fire losses aggregating \$750,000 during the year 1888, exceeding those of any previous year in Providence.⁴³ Three fires, occurring within the period of one week, were responsible for the bulk of the loss. Shortly after midnight on February 15, during a northwest gale and sub-zero temperature, fire broke out in the Chase and Arnold Block which destroyed that building as well as the Aldrich House (a four-story brick hotel, erected about 1860), Billings Block, and several smaller buildings within the block bounded by Eddy, Washington, Union and Fountain streets. Three days later, February 18th, the Theatre Comique (page 154) was burned, and a fire on February 19 gutted the Daniels Building which had been erected on Custom House Street following the conflagration of September 27, 1877 (page 155).

The city erected 15 schoolhouses during the eighties, the most important of which was Vineyard Street Grammar School, a two-story brick building designed by William R. Walker and Son and dedicated October 8, 1883; an addition was made in 1913. That building and the Tyler Parochial School, erected at the corner of Point and Plain streets in 1898 (James Murphy, architect), followed the design trend of the seventies in which considerable use was made of ornamental brickwork.

Three rather ornate buildings were erected on Westminster Street during this period. Dorrance Hotel (1880), extending north to Fulton Street and facing a gangway parallel to and west of Dorrance Street,⁴⁴ was five stories high with brick walls, a French roof, a pyramidal central tower, corner pavilions and a corbeled cornice; two stories were later added above the cornice, eliminating the French roof and tower (illustration, page 167).

41. All of these stations were abandoned between 1934 and 1951, some converted to other uses.

42. The Mill Street station was extended easterly to Constitution Hill where a ward room was maintained. An open flight of stone steps, identified as Thurber's Steps, rises north of the building from Mill Street to the hill. This and the other stations listed were closed between 1928 and 1950.

43. *C.M.*, 1899, Report of Fire Department.

44. The widening of Dorrance Street in 1855 (page 124) left a strip of land eight feet wide between that highway and the gangway, upon which a two-story building was put up for shops. This building and the hotel were razed about 1920 and on their site, including the gangway, the Woolworth Building was erected.

1880-1890

The five-story Conrad Building (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects, c. 1885), still standing at the corner of Aborn Street, has brick walls except for iron and glass store fronts, and a round corner bay window crowned by a Moorish dome. The brick and stone building erected by the Providence Young Men's Christian Association at the corner of Jackson Street (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects) in 1889, reflected French Romanesque influence; its five stories included offices, dormitories, a gymnasium and an auditorium.⁴⁵

Shepard and Company was established at 259 Westminster Street in 1880 and subsequently absorbed H. W. Ladd Company, located in the adjoining building. The store was enlarged and altered, from time to time, and extended to Washington Street. Heavy fire losses were suffered December 8, 1890 and March 8, 1923.



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Hotal Dorrance (1880-c. 1920), from photograph c. 1915 after upper stories had been altered.
City Hall at right; row of narrow shops in foreground.

When the college was established at Providence in 1770 it occupied an isolated tract on the hilltop to which a lane from Benefit Street served as entrance. During the next century Prospect, Waterman, George, Brown, Thayer, and Manning streets were laid out and the college grounds were extended north to Waterman Street and south to George Street (as far east as Brown Street in each case), and east to Thayer Street. The earliest academic buildings, University Hall (page 44) and Hope College (page 87), were Colonial

45. The Y.M.C.A., originally the Young Men's Christian Union, was established in 1854 at 56 Weybosset Street. Later quarters were maintained at 19 Westminster Street (1855), 98 Weybosset Street (1861), and Music Hall (1882). The Jackson Street building was demolished in 1912, following the erection of the present Y.M.C.A. building on Broad Street (page 229), and the site is occupied by the Jackson Building.

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in design; the next pair, Manning Hall (page 107) and Rhode Island Hall (page 109), followed the Greek revival. Rogers Hall (1862) was designed in the Italian Gothic style by Alpheus C. Morse. The practice of following current revival trends continued in the seventies as exemplified by the Victorian-Gothic Library and the French-Romanesque Slater Hall. The Library (Walker and Gould, architects, 1878) was erected at the corner of Waterman and Prospect Streets, north of the campus, through the bequest of John Carter Brown and a gift of his widow. It is cruciform in plan with brick and brownstone walls, a pointed entrance, and an octagonal dome.⁴⁶ Slater Hall (Stone and Carpenter, architects, 1879), given by Horatio N. Slater and built on the campus between University Hall and Rhode Island



Courtesy of the *Brown Alumni Monthly*

Sayles Hall, 1881, Brown University

Hall, is a French-influenced four-story brick dormitory with brownstone and ornamental brick trimming. More imposing than either is Sayles Hall (Alpheus C. Morse, architect, illustration above), built on the middle campus, south of Rogers Hall, in 1881, the gift of William F. Sayles as a memorial to his son who died while an undergraduate. The building is Romanesque with walls of rockface granite and brownstone trimming, a tower rising above the central portal. The auditorium, used also as a chapel, has an open-timber ceiling and its walls, below the windows, are lined with portraits. In the gallery is an organ given by Lucian Sharpe, Jr. of the class of 1893.

46. The building was discontinued as the college library after the erection of John Hay Library in 1910 (page 206). It later became headquarters of the Department of Economics and its name was changed to Robinson Hall.

1880 - 1890



R.I.H.S.

William Foster (1840) and Earl P. Mason (c. 1888) houses, 19 and 23 Charles Field Street, sacrificed for Brown expansion program, 1956.



William Gammell house, 1882, 170 Hope Street, now Saint Dunstan's School.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

House design during this period underwent a transition from complexity to simplicity. Many of the dwellings were built with first story walls of brick or stone and the upper stories of wood, covered with clapboards, shingles or slate. The gable-roofed Knapp house at 217 Hope Street is a combination of random ashlar and slate, and the gambrel-roofed Smith house at 165 Hope Street combines brick and clapboards and is featured by a Corinthian porch (both houses designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson).⁴⁷ The hip-roofed Sullivan house at 254 Wayland Avenue (William R. Walker, architect), is part brick and part shingles, with a bizarre arrangement of curved and octagonal surfaces. The Mason house at 23 Charles Field Street (Carl Pfeiffer of New York, architect) combined yellow brick walls over stone foundations, shingles, half-timbered work, bay windows, brackets and leaded glass (illustration, page 169). It was demolished in 1952.



Dr. George M. Carr house, c. 1885, 29 Waterman Street.

Among the last of the rococo dwellings in Providence were the works of Edwin I. Nickerson who made use of traditional forms in an original and unconventional manner. His exteriors were composed of many different kinds of materials and were highly ornamental; the principal rooms usually were paneled with golden oak, with decorative stairways, beamed ceilings and tiled fireplaces. A noteworthy example is the Carr house at 29 Waterman Street (illustration above), now a dormitory of the School of Design, the walls of which are composed of coursed and random ashlar, brick, and wood, with half-timber work in the gables and round bay-windows faced with bronze; a round tower with a pointed copper dome gives emphasis to the corner.

47. Edmund R. Willson (1856-1906), *architecte diplômé, Ecole des Beaux Arts*, Paris, who was admitted to the firm of Stone and Carpenter in 1882 and became its chief designer, was a pioneer in the Classic and Colonial revival.

In contrast with these complex dwellings is the Gammell house at 170 Hope Street, designed by Gould and Angell in 1882 and enlarged a few years later (illustration, page 169). The walls are yellow brick with granite and limestone trimmings; an arched entrance porch centers on the Hope Street facade and a wide bay window is placed near the north corner. The windows are very wide with single-lighted sashes, and the ornamentation is confined principally to the roof gables and chimneys. It became St. Dunstan's School in 1954.

The manufacturing industries of Providence had increased, by 1880, to become the most potent factor in the life of the community. In that year there were nearly 1200 manufacturing establishments in the city with a capital of over \$23,000,000, employing over 26,000 persons,⁴⁸ constituting one-fourth the population of Providence. While the industrial development brought wealth, employment opportunities and population growth to the city its effect upon the physical welfare of the people was disturbing.

Even before the method of controlling civic development by zoning was devised, in the 20th century (page 233), a somewhat definite segregation of land areas for residential, business and industrial areas had been established in most cities. Business districts were developed in central locations where main thoroughfares converged; factories were built on low lands along harbors, rivers and railroads; and home neighborhoods were situated in more elevated or distant areas, away from the noise and smoke of industry, the congestion of business, and the heart of traffic.⁴⁹ The industrial development of Providence had been too haphazard for any scheme of factory grouping; and while some of the larger plants were appropriately situated along the waterways and the railroad, large numbers of machine shops, textile works, iron foundries, rubber works, soap manufactories and jewelry establishments, filling the air with smoke, dust, offensive odors and noises, were erected throughout the city with little regard for neighborhood environment. As a result many residents of the areas unpleasantly affected by the industrial invasion were forced to remove to other environments and the vacated districts degenerated into slums.

The earliest manufacturing area grew up along Moshassuck valley. On Charles Street, a short distance west of the original grist mill (page 7), was the plant of the Fletcher Manufacturing Company (incorporated 1865), makers of laces, lamp wicks and small wares. Established in 1793 by Charles Fletcher and first located on South Main Street, the company built its first mill on the Charles Street site in 1844, to which subsequent additions were made. On Stevens Street, east of the river, was the plant of the American Screw Company, established 1860 by consolidation of the Eagle Screw Company and the New England Screw Company; the Eagle Mills (1840) were located on the south side of Stevens Street and the Bay State Mills (1873) on the north side. At Charles and Nichols streets, on the west bank of the river, were the works of the Franklin Machine Company (incorporated 1886), first established as the Franklin Foundry and Machine Company in 1836. Allen's Print Works (incorporated 1857), founded by Philip Allen (page 111) in 1830, were located between the river and Branch Avenue, south of North Burial Ground. The Corliss Steam Engine Works, organized 1846 by George H. Corliss, inventor of the Corliss engine, were on a five-acre tract on Cross Street, extending northerly from the Charles Street railroad overpass. The Rhode Island Tool Company (incorporated 1883), successor to the Providence Tool Company, established 1844 on Wickenden Street, maintained a plant built by the Providence Forge and Nut Company in 1844 on West River Street, extending westerly to the railroad. At the corner of Admiral and Whipple streets, west of the railroad, was the

48. *U. S. Census of Manufactures*, 1880.

49. Robert Whitten, *The Providence Zone Plan*, 1923, p. 3.

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plant of the Oriental Mills (established 1860), manufacturers of cotton cloth. The Silver Spring Bleaching and Dyeing Company, established 1864 by Henry Lippitt and Charles H. Merriman in the bleachery of Frieze and Dow (1850) on the south bank of West river, a tributary of the Moshassuck, erected a new mill near the old one on Charles Street, east of a spring from which the company took its name. Farther west on West river, at 725 Branch Avenue, were the woolen and worsted mills of the Wanskuck Company, organized 1862 by Jesse Metcalf and Henry J. Steere.⁵⁰

A number of plants were located along Woonasquatucket river, the easterly end of which originally was a part of the cove. At the corner of Promenade and Park streets William A. Harris, engine builder (first established on Eddy Street) erected a machine shop in 1864, where the Harris-Corliss steam engines were made. Farther west, on Promenade Street, Brown and Sharpe Manufacturing Company erected, in 1870, the first building of



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Brown & Sharpe Manufacturing Co., Promenade Street.

their present plant (illustration above). The firm was founded in 1833 as David Brown and Son, with a shop at 43 South Main Street; it was changed to J. R. Brown and Sharpe in 1853 and was incorporated under its present name in 1868. On Acorn Street, south of the river, the Nicholson File Company erected a plant in 1864; this company was successor to Nicholson and Brownell (established 1858) which had been located, successively, at 85 Eddy Street and 110 Dorrance Street. At Hemlock and Valley streets, north of the river, was

50. The Rhode Island Tool Co. and the Wanskuck Co. extended their plants and were still in operation in 1950. The plant of Fletcher Manufacturing Co. was extended westerly beyond Ormsbee Avenue to the railroad property; it was later operated by the International Braid Co., subsequently vacated. Oriental Mills have been taken over by the American Silk Spinning Co. Allen's Print Works and Corliss Steam Engine Co. suspended operations. Franklin Machine Co. moved from its original location to the Corliss plant and subsequently removed from Providence, establishing plants in East Providence and Cranston. Silver Spring Bleachery was enlarged and West river was dammed and reservoirs constructed to provide a water supply; the plant was acquired by the United States Finishing Co. in 1903 and was operated by that company until 1937. American Screw Co. removed to Willimantic, Conn. in 1949.

the plant of the Rhode Island Locomotive Works, incorporated by Earl P. Mason and others in 1865 as successor to the Burnside Rifle Company (page 131); steam locomotives were manufactured here until the suspension of business about 1890. The Woonasquatucket Print Works was operated by the Richmond Manufacturing Company between Valley Street and the river, west of Eagle Street. On Eagle Street, south of the river, stood the Valley Worsted Mills, incorporated 1872 for the manufacture of braids and yarns; it was the earliest worsted mill in the country and, when first opened in 1842, its machinery was operated by means of a windlass turned by oxen. The Providence Worsted Mills (incorporated 1883), established by Charles Fletcher in 1876, manufactured worsted, mohair and genappe yarns on Valley Street, south of the bend in the river. In the Olneyville section of Valley Street, east of the river, was the plant of the Providence Dyeing, Bleaching and Calendering Company (incorporated 1842), founded in 1814 as the Patent Calender Company on Sabin Street where the first steam engine used in the United States for bleaching, dyeing and finishing was put in operation; the company's first dye house, on Valley Street, was a converted grist mill, later replaced by a brick factory. The Atlantic Mills, incorporated 1879 for the manufacture of worsted and cotton warp fabrics, occupied two mills, built 1851 and 1865, respectively, by the Atlantic DeLaine Company on Manton Avenue, east of the river above its Olneyville loop. Farther north, on Aleppo Street, were the Riverside Worsted Mills (incorporated 1865), founded by George W. Chapin and Louis T. Downs; the earlier products were coffin coverings, cassimeres and astrachan coatings, and later the first worsted goods for men's wear made in the country were produced in the mill.⁵¹

Another concentrated manufacturing area was developed along the fringe of Eddy Street. The Kendall Manufacturing Company (incorporated 1860), founded by Henry L. Kendall in 1827, was at the corner of Friendship and Page streets where "French laundry soap" and "soapine" were manufactured. The plant of the Providence Steam and Gas Piping Company (incorporated 1865) was at Eddy and Ship streets; established in 1850 by J. C. Hartshorn in association with Thomas Arnold, William Barbour and Thomas Angell, it was acquired in 1869 by Frederick Grinnell who developed the Grinnell automatic sprinkler. The Phenix Iron Foundry (incorporated 1832), founded by George D. Holmes for the manufacture of textile machinery, stood at Eddy and Elm streets. The Barstow Stove Foundry (incorporated 1859) was established by Amos C. Barstow at Point and Chestnut streets in 1836. Providence Machine Company (incorporated 1879), established by Thomas J. Hill in 1834 (page 137), operated a plant, built in 1845, for the manufacture of cotton and worsted roving forms. At Eddy and Henderson streets were the New England Mills of the American Screw Company, erected 1860 (illustration, page 174). A number of manufacturing jewelers and other industrial establishments were located on Pine, Friendship and Clifford streets, most of which were tenants in brick buildings four to five stories in height.⁵²

Located in the Fox Point section of the Neck were the Household Sewing Machine Company at Wickenden and Bridge streets, incorporated 1882 as an offshoot of the

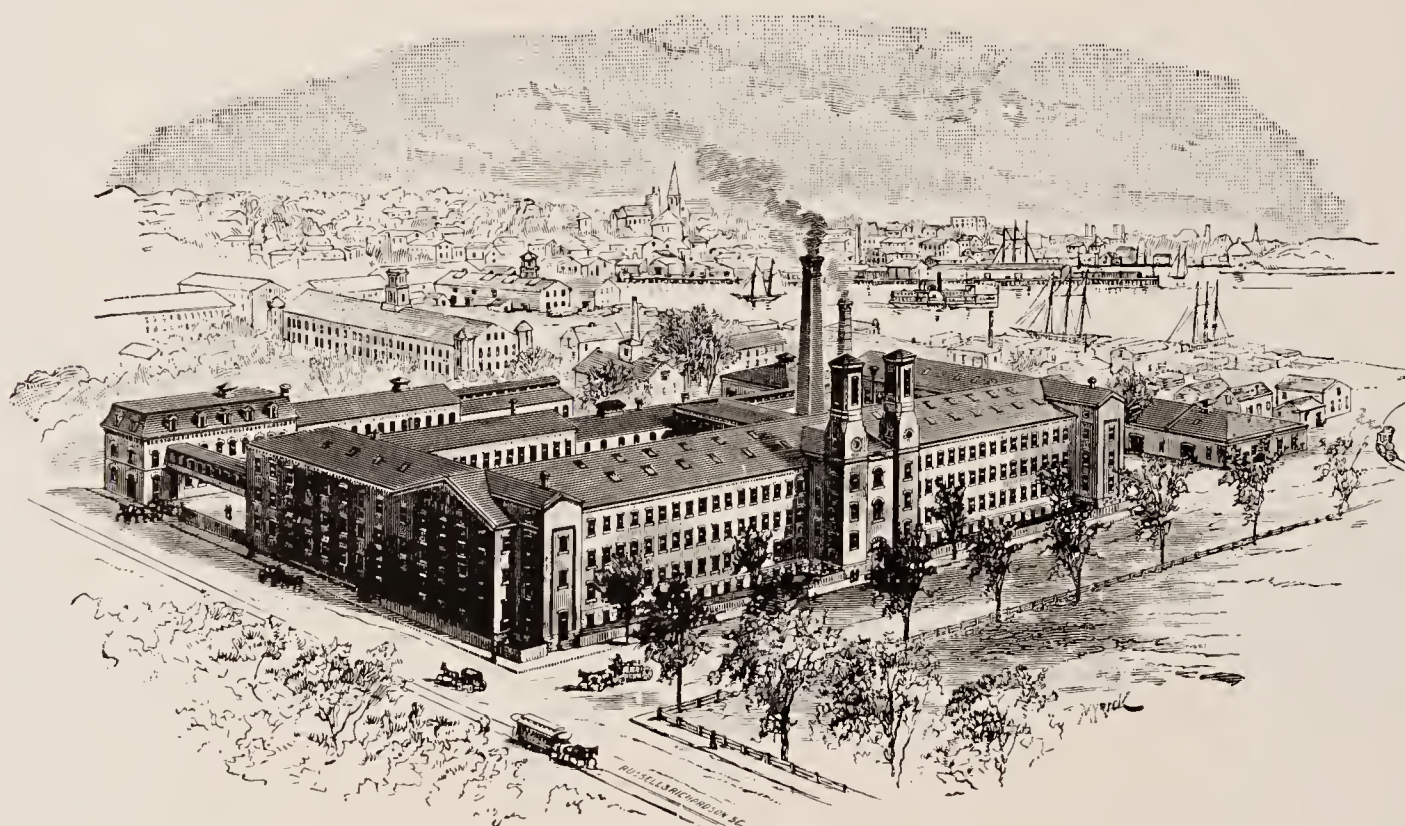
51. Of the Woonasquatucket river plants only Brown and Sharpe Manufacturing Co. and Nicholson File Co. have survived.

52. None of the manufacturing establishments in this group remain in operation. The Providence Steam and Gas Piping Co. was succeeded in 1893 by the General Fire Extinguisher Co. and the plant was moved to West Exchange Street. The Providence Machine Co. site is occupied by the Franklin Process Co. who erected new buildings. The site of the Phenix Iron Foundry is a part of the Narragansett Electric plant. Barstow Stove Company's building has been converted to other uses. The American Screw Co. removed to Willimantic, Conn. in 1949. Several manufacturing buildings on Friendship and Clifford streets, including Kendall Manufacturing Co., were torn down to provide parking lots. Others were razed in 1956 for a freeway project.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

Providence Tool Company who erected the building in 1844; the Providence Steam Engine Company (incorporated 1863) at South Main and Bridge streets, founded by R. L. Thurston and John Babcock in 1834; and the Fuller Iron Works at South Main and Pike streets, established in 1840 by Frederick A. Fuller who commenced the manufacture of steam engines, pipes and castings in a factory built by the Fox Point Foundry Company.⁵³

Of the many manufacturing plants which spotted the map of Providence in isolated locations a few were of particular consequence. The American Ship Windlass Company (established 1857) manufactured windlasses, capstans and other marine products on East River Street, near Red Bridge.⁵⁴ Builders Iron Foundry (incorporated 1853), first established in 1822 as High Street Furnace, manufactured iron castings, water meters and architectural



American Screw Co., Eddy and Henderson Streets.

iron work on Coddington Street (page 131). New England Butt Company (incorporated 1853), founded by Nicholas A. Fenner in 1842, manufactured braiding machinery on Pearl Street. Weybosset Mills (incorporated 1865), established by Royal C. Taft and William B. Weeden in 1864, were located on Dike Street in the Olneyville section; operations commenced in a stone mill built by John Waterman in 1836 for manufacturing cotton, to which additions were made.⁵⁵ Gorham Manufacturing Company, founded by Jabez Gorham in 1813 and

53. The Household Sewing Machine building was razed in 1920 to provide a wider approach to Point Street Bridge (page 235). Providence Steam Engine Company was succeeded by the Providence Engineering Works. The Fuller Iron Works were discontinued in 1933.

54. The plant was damaged by fire April 22, 1904, and went up in flames January 19, 1918; the site is now occupied by a filling station.

55. Weybosset Mills were absorbed by the American Woolen Company in 1889 and are no longer in operation.

1880 - 1890

incorporated 1863 for the manufacture of jewelry and silverware, maintained a shop at North Main and Steeple streets until 1889 when it erected a large plant in the Elmwood section between the railroad and Mashapaug pond.

The Providence Drydock and Marine Railway Company was established at Bold Point, East Providence, in 1884 with facilities for hauling and repairing sailing vessels and steamboats not exceeding 1800 tons in weight (see map, page 220). The three-masted schooner *Asa T. Stowell*, named for the company's superintendent, was built at the plant and launched October 13, 1891.⁵⁶

Mayor Thomas A. Doyle died in office June 9, 1886, two weeks before the municipal observance of the 250th anniversary of the settlement of Providence, having served as chief executive since the year 1864 except for the intervening terms of George L. Clarke (1869-70) and William A. Hayward (1881-84). A bronze statue of Mayor Doyle, designed by Henry H. Kitson, was erected on Cathedral Square (illustration, page 176) and dedicated June 3, 1889. Another monument, a bronze equestrian statue of General Ambrose E. Burnside, executed by Launt Thompson, was erected on a foundation of piles in front of the Central Fire Station⁵⁷ at the east end of Exchange Place and dedicated July 4, 1887.

56. The drydock continued operations until 1919 when the reduced number of small water craft caused its liquidation. A drydock capable of handling larger craft was constructed on Allen's Avenue, north of Harbor Junction Pier (see map, page 220), in 1918 by the Marine Engineering and Drydock Company, but operations were suspended after a few years; the plant was later occupied by Wallace and Tucker Lumber Company.

57. The Burnside monument was moved to City Hall Park in 1905.



R.I.H.S.

Slater Mill, Pawtucket, established 1793



R.I.H.S.

Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, consecrated 1889, Cathedral Square.
Doyle monument in foreground.

CHAPTER 15 1890 - 1900

ALTHOUGH the street directories of the early nineties listed several hundred "avenues," none of these had any characteristic distinguishing it from an ordinary street until Elmwood Avenue was opened in 1892 from Broad street to Elmwood Park. This was originally a section of the Greenwich Middle Road (page 28) and was named Greenwich Street after a part of Cranston had been re-annexed to Providence in 1868; the westerly fork, at Elmwood Park, was called Reservoir Avenue after completion of Sockanosset Reservoir (page 135) and the continuation of Greenwich Street, leading to Roger Williams Park, was named Elmwood Avenue in 1872. Greenwich Street, in 1890, was an attractive residential highway, 49 feet wide, its sidewalks bordered by large elm trees, and car tracks extending through the middle of the roadway, continuing to Roger Williams Park. Plans for the improvement of Greenwich Street,¹ made by City Engineer J. Herbert Shedd, retained the 30-foot roadway, the curbings, and the trees, and increased the width to 73 feet by adding to each side a 6-foot grass strip, a 6½-foot space for car tracks (removed from the roadway), and a 9-foot sidewalk. As most of the residences on the street were set well back from the sidewalk the land condemned for the widening consisted principally of lawn areas. The project was approved by the City Council June 30, 1891, and the reconstructed highway was opened the following year and re-named Elmwood Avenue.²

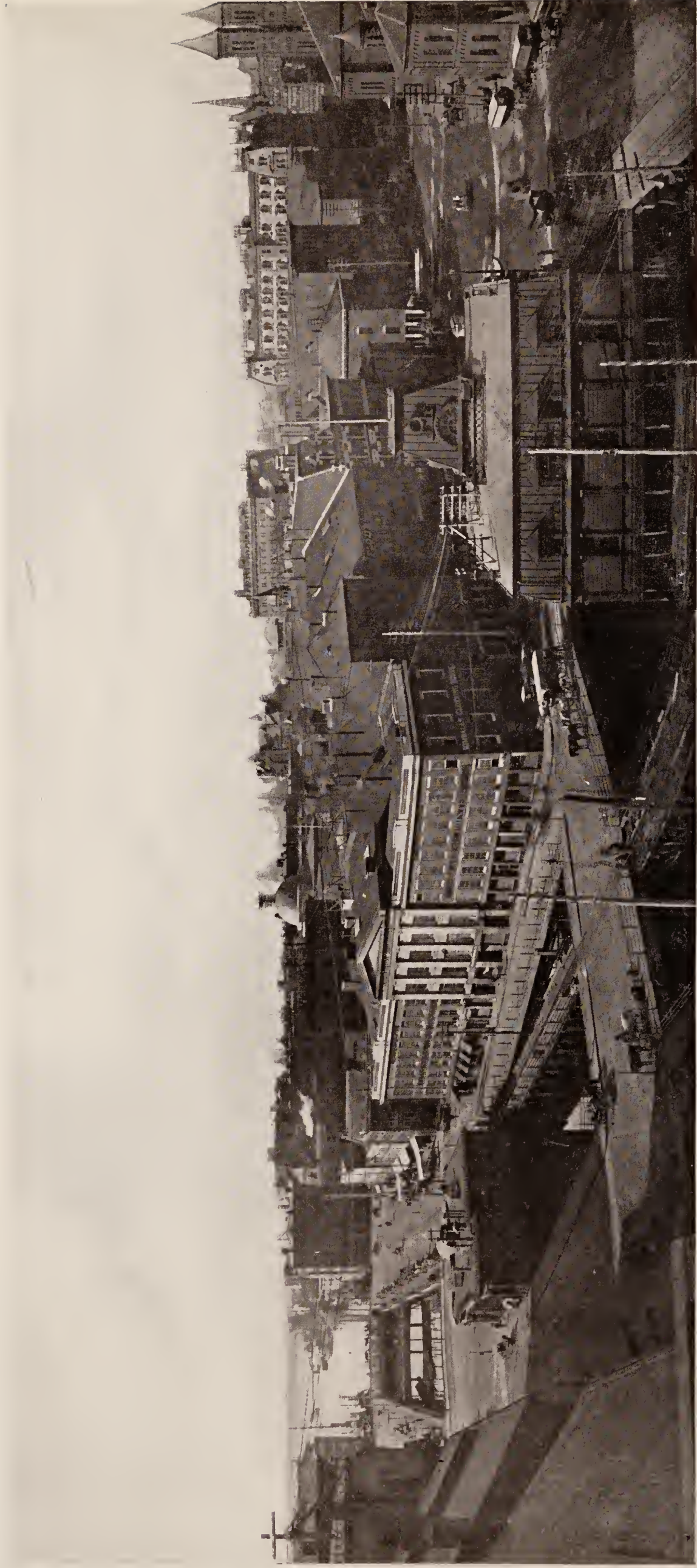
Another highway improvement was the layout of Blackstone Boulevard, first proposed by the Proprietors of Swan Point Cemetery in 1886. At that time Butler Avenue (built about 1870) extended northerly to North Street (Rochambeau Avenue) and, from the intersection, the old Neck Road (page 15) ran east and north through the cemetery grounds³ to Pawtucket. The cemetery directors engaged the services of H. W. S. Cleveland of Chicago, Illinois, under whose direction plans were made for a boulevard 200 feet wide, composed of a central park area flanked by roadways, grass strips and sidewalks. A highway act was passed by the General Assembly in 1890, under which the Supreme Court appointed a commission on the laying out, widening and extension of Butler Avenue to East Avenue in Pawtucket. Construction of the highway, which followed the Cleveland plan and was designated Blackstone Boulevard, was started in 1892; the roadways were completed in 1894 but the park area was not developed until 1904 (page 203). The cemetery erected a boulder wall along its property on the east side of the boulevard in which a new entrance gate was installed.

The old method of paving the principal city highways with cobblestones (page 143) was discontinued in 1886 when Market Square and Dorrance Street were re-paved with granite blocks, laid on a concrete foundation. The highly rounded form of roadway also was

1. *C.D. No. 10*, 1892.

2. The southerly part of Elmwood Avenue, extending to Roger Williams Park, subsequently was developed in the same manner. When the highway was reconstructed in 1938 the car tracks and trees were removed and the highway widened (page 262).

3. See pages 119, 149. By further acquisitions of land the cemetery owned about 123 acres west of the Neck road, mostly undeveloped, extending in part as far as East Avenue (Hope Street). Compare Cady, *Swan Point Cemetery, A Centennial History*, 1947, pp. 29-30.



R.I.H.S.

View south from Canal Street c. 1890. Cove Street (Burnside) Bridge, center foreground, intersected by bridge with tracks for freight cars. Weybosset Bridge, left center beyond Union Railroad Depot. Washington Row Bridge (center) and Washington Buildings (1843-1916). Central Fire Station (lower right), 1873-1902.

abandoned, and after 1889 highways were constructed with nearly flat surfaces from curb to curb.⁴ The first asphalt paving was laid on Union Street in 1891,⁵ and proved so successful that it was adopted for re-paving Pine Street in 1893 and Broadway in 1894,⁶ to the satisfaction of bicycle riders who thronged those highways.

Mayor Edwin D. McGuinness reported, in his inaugural address in 1897, a total of 174 miles of paved streets, surfaced as follows: macadam, 81.6 percent; granite blocks, 14.4 percent; cobblestones, 1.8 percent; asphalt, 1.6 percent; and other methods, 0.6 percent.

The Union Railroad Company was granted permission by the City Council, in 1891, to operate the "overhead trolley system" on its rails,⁷ and the first trolley line was opened on the Broad Street route in the following year, instituting a new era in street railway transportation. Other horse car lines, as well as the cable tramway line, were soon electrified and on April 24, 1894, the last of the horse cars were withdrawn from the streets of Providence.⁸ Grip cars, attached to counterweights, were coupled to cars operating on College Hill whose grade of 16 percent was too steep for electric propulsion (illustration, page 180). Following the passage by the General Assembly, in 1892, of an exclusive franchise act for the Union Railway Company to operate in Providence and its suburbs, and the authorization of an issue of bonds, that company erected a power house on Eddy Street, north of Point Street, in 1893. The lines soon began to expand into suburban districts and rails were laid on Washington Bridge in 1894 and on Red Bridge in 1895, over which cars were run to East Providence.

Construction work incident to the terminal development plan (page 163) was continued during the nineties. The retaining walls, erected through the Cove basin to confine the rivers in their new courses and completed in 1892, provided a width of 100 feet for the Woonasquatucket and 50 feet for the Moshassuck, the two rivers converging into Providence river a short distance east of the proposed railroad buildings (see map, page 164). The remainder of the Cove basin was filled, the Cove Promenade was eradicated, and the three river bridges in the promenade were removed. The highways included in the program were built, including the extension of Francis and Gaspee streets southerly to Exchange Place, the extension of Promenade Street easterly to Canal Street, and three new highways — Kinsley Avenue, Railroad Street and Stillman Street. Bridges of steel construction were erected on stone piers spanning, respectively, Woonasquatucket river at Francis Street and Moshassuck river at Promenade Street. The highways and bridges were paved with granite blocks and all were opened to traffic by 1896. Meanwhile, the railroad companies were constructing the elevated tracks, supported by stone walls and steel girders, and abutments for the highway underpasses, and were laying out the freight yards (illustration, page 238). The various transfers of land between the city and the railroads were consummated by 1895 and in the following year freight trains were routed over the new rails.

Construction of the new railroad buildings (illustration, page 250), designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson, was started in 1896.⁹ These consisted of five units, extending

4. Report of Director of Public Works, 1891.

5. *C.D. No. 10*, 1892.

6. *C.D. No. 22*, 1894.

7. *C.D. No. 21*, 1891. The Union Railroad Company had received authority in 1889 to operate cars by storage batteries, but after experiments that method was abandoned.

8. Field, II, 556.

9. An act of the General Assembly, passed March 28, 1890, provided for the construction of a passenger station by the Old Colony and the New York, Providence and Boston railroads. These roads were absorbed by the New York, New Haven and Hartford in 1893.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

lengthwise 870 feet, with the Passenger Station in the center, overpassing Francis Street, its main floor located at the level of the elevated tracks to which access was provided by a system of ramps and stairways.¹⁰ The walls of the building were constructed of yellow brick and terra cotta, the facade featured by a low central clock tower and by marble colonnades connecting the station with the wings. The old passenger depot (page 117) was destroyed by fire February 20, 1896, and a temporary station was erected to serve until the new building was opened, in the latter part of 1898. Exchange Place was widened to include a portion of the area formerly occupied by the old depot, and highway approaches to the new station were constructed (see map, page 164).



R.I.H.S.

Market Square c. 1898 showing cars used on College Hill counterweight system. Market House (1773) left; Roger Williams Bank Building (1823) center; Franklin House (1823) right.

The city carried out an extensive bridge-building program, between 1892 and 1897, involving the construction of new retaining walls for Providence river from the convergence of Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck rivers southerly to the head of navigation at Crawford Bridge, and the erection of new steel spans in replacement of the wooden bridges (page 145). The retaining walls were so spaced as to provide a channel of a uniform width of 132 feet,

10. The easterly unit, comprising the freight offices, was destroyed by fire February 18, 1941. The basement story was reconstructed with a flat roof, providing a trucking area. Various alterations were made to the buildings in the 1950s.

and two rows of intermediate piers were built northerly from the south side of Weybosset Bridge.¹¹ The new spans included (1) Washington Bridge, from the north end of Washington Row to Canal Street, completed in 1893 and re-named Burnside Bridge; (2) Washington Row Bridge, erected laterally from the west wall to the west intermediate row of piers in 1895; (3) Exchange Bridge, running northeast from Exchange Place to Canal Street, opened in 1895; and (4) Weybosset Bridge, including an extension along Canal Street from the east wall to the east intermediate row of piers, constructed 1897-98 (see map, page 144). The roadway of Burnside Bridge was paved with brick and the others with asphalt.¹² The old horse car depot (page 134) was removed and the river opening opposite Washington Row was narrowed, providing an increased width of Canal Street.

Tests of Red Bridge were made in 1894 which indicated that the structure, erected in 1872 (page 145), was too lightly constructed for heavy traffic. Acting on legislative authority the City Council ordered a new bridge at the same location in that year. The old abutments were lengthened and raised two and one-half feet, granite draw piers were constructed on pile foundations, and a steel superstructure was erected with a trussed draw operated by electric motors. The roadway was 30 feet wide with a six-foot sidewalk on each side. The bridge was opened to traffic December 23, 1895,¹³ and first named Central Bridge but later changed back to its former name.

Several smaller bridges were constructed during this period. Spanning Woonasquatucket river were an iron bridge in Manton village, built jointly by the city of Providence and the town of Johnston in 1890; an iron trussed bridge at Acorn Street, built in 1893 to replace a privately-owned span at Hemlock Street; and a steel bridge at Manton Avenue in Olneyville, built in 1897 to replace the former Tar Bridge (see map, page 70). Erected across Moshassuck river were a granite-arch bridge at Stevens Street in 1894 and a steel bridge at Mill Street in 1900, both replacing former wood spans. And over West river bridges were built at Hawkins and Charles streets in 1892 and 1894, respectively.¹⁴

In accordance with a plan prepared by the harbor commissioners for extending wharfage facilities on the west side of Providence river the General Assembly passed an act, in 1891,¹⁵ permitting the city to borrow \$150,000 for building a retaining wall from Hill's Wharf southward to Sassafras Point, parallel to and 600 feet west of the harbor line established by the assembly April 12, 1883. The plan contemplated the filling of tide-flowed flats within the retaining walls which would provide a reclaimed area of 90 acres for commercial purposes, and the erection of a row of wharves extending from the wall to the harbor line. The only part of this program actually carried out by the city, however, was the erection of a dock, 105 feet wide and 600 feet long, extending to the harbor line from city-owned land south of Hill's Wharf.¹⁶ That land, acquired in 1890, extended from Eddy Street to the river and was intercepted by Allen's Avenue (see map, page 220). Several buildings were constructed for municipal departments during the ensuing five years, and the city wood yard was moved to the site from its former location adjoining the Cove basin. Additional land was purchased later extending the property south to Blackstone Street.

The shipping entering Narragansett bay toward the close of the century was almost

11. The distance between the old walls varied from 152 feet at the north end to 117 feet at the south. The intermediate wood piles flanking the river opening south of Market Square, built in 1874, were continued until 1929.

12. C.E., Reports, 1893-1899.

13. Report of Committee on Bridges, 1896.

14. C.E., Reports, 1894-98.

15. P.L., 1891, chapter 997.

16. See page 137. A considerable amount of tide-flowed land subsequently was reclaimed by owners of shore property and several wharves were built, but the development was carried out in a haphazard manner.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

wholly engaged in coastwise trade. The most important commodity brought into the port of Providence was coal, conveyed by schooners and barges to the coal pockets of local companies and unloaded by means of mechanical appliances. Lumber, brick and other building materials were next to coal in value and amount of imports. Among the schooners bringing coal from Newport News to Providence was the *Governor Ames*, a five-master. The barges, in strings of two and three, were towed by powerful tugs.¹⁷

The sewerage plan, instituted in 1874 (page 146), by which storm waters and domestic sewage were conveyed into Woonasquatucket, Moshassuck and Providence rivers, brought about a high degree of pollution in those waterways which was aggravated by mill waste from manufacturing plants. This condition was investigated by a special committee consisting of Superintendent of Health Edwin M. Snow, City Engineer S. M. Gray, and Professor J. Howard Appleton of Brown University who proposed to the City Council, December 17, 1883, the construction of a comprehensive system of intercepting sewers, together with a means for clarifying the sewage before its final disposal. A plan was presented by the city engineer, July 23, 1884,¹⁸ whereby the sewage would be conveyed to Sassafras Point for chemical treatment and then discharged into Providence river. The council referred Mr. Gray's report to the American Society of Civil Engineers for consideration and, following its approval, adopted the plan July 22, 1887. About 48 acres of land, adjacent to the city's Field's Point estate (page 147) was acquired for the sewerage works under authority granted by the General Assembly March 22, 1888, and the construction of the intercepting sewers was started in 1889 under direction of Commissioner of Public Works John A. Coleman. In that year the Board of Aldermen received authority from the General Assembly to compel connection with the sewers on received streets and to cause the removal of privy vaults and cesspools.¹⁹ The intercepting sewers, and their connection with existing sewers, were so far completed that the system was opened in 1897, with the crude sewage temporarily discharging into Providence river off Sassafras Point (see map, page 220). A pumping station was erected on Ernest Street and precipitation tanks and sludge presses were installed and put in operation by 1900; on January 1 of that year City Engineer Otis F. Clapp reported a total of 175 miles of sewer lines, providing service for nearly all built-up sections of the city.²⁰

In spite of the advantages of the sewerage system the pollution of the waterways was not abated; this was due to the disposal of raw sewage into the streams outside the city limits and the continued discharge of mill wastes. A special committee, appointed by the City Council in 1895, sought means to overcome those conditions.²¹ Remedies were still being sought fifty years later (page 282).

The Providence water system (page 135) was extended by construction of a high service reservoir, located at an elevation of 275 feet above sea level in the Fruit Hill section of North Providence. This project, including connections with Hope pumping station, was completed in 1889. During the next ten years 94 high pressure hydrants were installed on the principal streets for the use of the fire department.²² The city also maintained

17. Field, II, 487.

18. C.D. No. 25, 1884.

19. C.M., 1889, p. 10. Previously owners of property were not compelled to make connections with city sewers and on January 1, 1889, 5,000 privy vaults and 2,500 cesspools were still in use on property bordering received streets.

20. C.E., report, 1900.

21. C.D. No. 30, 1895; C.D. No. 21, 1897.

22. C.D. No. 10, 1900. The city engineer reported, as of December 31, 1899, a total of 318 miles of water pipe laid, 19,582 service pipes installed, and 1,772 ordinary hydrants in use in addition to the high pressure hydrants.

1890 - 1900

drinking fountains and horse drinking troughs at various locations on the public highways. The latter were of particular importance in the pre-automobile era; although horse cars had passed into history before 1899, the superintendent of hacks issued licenses in that year for 633 wagons, 154 hacks, 76 low gears, 154 carts, 25 lumber reaches, and 31 lunch carts.²³ The city directory for 1900 listed 83 livery stables in the city, and several hundred stables were maintained by home owners.

The fire department was placed under control of a board of three fire commissioners in 1895, and an organization was effected consisting of a chief engineer (George A. Steere),



R.I.H.S.

View of Market Square toward west, 1892. Union Bank Building (c. 1810) and Merchants Bank Building (1855) left. Industrial Trust Building under construction, center. Rhode Island Hospital Trust Building (1891-1916) and Washington Buildings (1843-1916), right.

deputy chief engineer and two assistants. In the following year underground wires were laid to the signal boxes in the fire district.²⁴ Fire stations were erected on Manton Avenue (1889), Greenwich Street (1889), Branch Avenue (1890), South Main Street (1892), Olney Street (1892), Wickenden Street (1895) and Broad Street (1896). These were two-story buildings, mostly of brick, with wide-arched portals, stables in the rear, and sleeping quarters on the second floor for the firemen, who made quick descents by means of brass poles. The Olney Street station (Hoppin, Reid and Hoppin, architects), was ornamented

23. *C.D. No. 13*, 1900.

24. *C.D. No. 8*, 1897.

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by a gabled roof section composed of stepped-up parapets. A fire station on Plainfield Street was acquired when the city annexed a part of the town of Johnston in 1898.²⁵

The police department in 1900, under Chief Reuben R. Baker, comprised about 200 staff members, officers and patrolmen. Included in the personnel were a superintendent of hacks and a superintendent of the signal system, the latter having oversight of the signal boxes recently erected on poles on the city highways where patrolmen reported to headquarters.²⁶ A central police station was erected in 1895 on a lot bounded by Fountain, Sabin and Beverly streets where two schoolhouses formerly had stood; it provided quarters for the police and poor departments and the Police Court (page 187).²⁷ District stations were erected on Atwells Avenue (1889) and Chaffee Street (1890), and stables for mounted police were built adjacent to the Knight and Plain Street stations in 1895.

Roger Williams Park, originally a tract of 100 acres (page 148) was increased in size between 1886 and 1893 to a total of 462 acres,²⁸ one-quarter of which was composed of water areas including Cunliff pond, No-Bottom pond, and three artificial lakes. The landscape development, designed by H. W. S. Cleveland, included the construction of the lakes in the marshland through which Mashapaug brook originally flowed into Cunliff pond, the layout of roads and paths, the construction of stone bridges, and the planting of trees and flowers. An enclosure was built for a deer park, a steam launch and row boats were purchased, and electric lights were installed along the drives. Skating and tobogganing facilities were provided for winter sports, and concerts were given by Reeves' American Band during summer months,²⁹ with Bowen R. Church and Claude Spary cornet and trombone soloists.

The earliest buildings erected after acquisition of the park were a boat house and What Cheer Cottage which were replaced, respectively, by the Dalrymple Boat House (Martin and Hall, architects) in 1897 and the Casino (Banning and Thornton, architects) in 1898. Other buildings included a stable in 1890, a menagerie in 1891, and a Natural History Museum, designed by Martin and Hall in the French chateau style in 1895. The museum was the recipient of numerous gifts, including mounted animals, skins, minerals, and a collection of birds, the latter presented by Charles H. Smith. The menagerie acquired an elephant, "Baby Roger," in 1892, the gift of Providence school children. Among the sculptured works erected in the park, in addition to the statue of Roger Williams (page 148), were a statue, "The Athlete," by Theo. Ruggles-Kitson and a replica of "The Fighting Gladiator" (both executed by Gorham Manufacturing Company), a bust of King Ferdinand of Naples, and "The Falconer," the latter designed by Henry H. Elton and given to the city by Daniel W. Lyman in memory of his grandfather, Governor Elisha Dyer.

25. All of these stations were vacated between 1940 and 1952. The Olney Street station was altered and converted to commercial use in 1956.

26. *C.D. No. 13*, 1900.

27. The central police station was vacated upon completion of the Bureau of Police and Fire Building in 1940 (page 261) and was used subsequently by the Providence Water Department and the Department of Public Welfare.

28. The additions included (1) the purchase in 1886 of a three-acre strip west of Elmwood Avenue, extending to the railroad; (2) the purchase of a two-acre triangular tract in Cranston, south of the park entrance on Elmwood Avenue, including the west end of Crystal lake, re-annexed to Providence May 6, 1887; (3) the conveyance of two small lots by John M. and Susan P. Clemence in 1891; (4) the purchase of a tract of 285 acres in Cranston, extending southerly to Park Avenue and including Cunliff pond, re-annexed to Providence July 1, 1892 (see map, page 130); and (5) the purchase of two tracts aggregating 82 acres in 1892-93, one extending the park northerly to the Harbor Junction branch of the railroad and easterly to Broad Street and the other fringing the north border of Cunliff pond.

29. Park Department reports, 1890-97.

The most important addition to the public park system during this period was the 34-acre Thomas Davis estate (page 141), acquisition of which was effected through the activities of the Public Park Association in cooperation with the Board of Park Commissioners which became operative January 1, 1891. Following legislative approval,³⁰ the city purchased the property July 14, 1891, and named it Davis Park. Improvements were made to the grounds during ensuing years and the park was increased in area by purchase of 4½ acres in 1897. It was abandoned in 1945 (page 278).

On July 7, 1891, the City Council, acting upon authority granted by the General Assembly March 24 of that year, condemned for public purposes the Hopkins Burial Ground at the corner of Charles Street and Branch Avenue,³¹ and named it Admiral Hopkins Square in the following year. A bronze statue of Esek Hopkins, first admiral of the United States Navy, executed by Mrs. Theo. Ruggles-Kitson, was erected in the park in 1897 with funds devised by Harriet N. H. Coggeshall, a great granddaughter of the admiral.

A bronze replica of the silver statue of Christopher Columbus, cast by Gorham Manufacturing Company from the design of Auguste Bartholdi for the Chicago World's Fair, was erected on Elmwood Park (page 147) at the junction of Elmwood and Reservoir avenues, in 1893, in which year the area was re-named Columbus Park. A bronze statue of Ebenezer Knight Dexter was donated to the city by Henry C. Clarke in memory of the man "who gave his property for the benefit of the public and the homeless" and was set up in the center of Dexter Training Ground (page 147) and dedicated June 29, 1893, in which year the maintenance of that public area was transferred to the board of park commissioners.

The area of Providence was increased in the closing years of the century to a total of about 18½ square miles by re-annexations of about 275 acres from Cranston in 1892, principally for a southerly extension of Roger Williams Park (page 184), and about 1¼ square miles from Johnston in 1898, including the Olneyville section and the eastern part of Neutaconkanut Hill.³² Under the city charter of 1832 the city was divided into six wards and the council was required "from time to time . . . to revise and, if needful, to alter said wards in such a manner as to preserve, as nearly as may be, an equal number of freemen to each." Although four new wards were established between 1857 and 1874, through re-annexations of territory and ward subdivisions (pages 135, 149), no revisions were made to their boundaries to provide an equal distribution of qualified voters until 1887. On April 19 of that year the General Assembly enacted an amendment to the city charter providing for election of an alderman and four councilmen from each of ten wards and authorizing the re-districting of those wards by commissioners. A second readjustment of ward boundaries was made by a committee appointed by the council in 1900,³³ in which the re-annexed portion of Johnston was included in ward 8.

The destruction of the United States battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor February 15, 1898, precipitated the Spanish-American war, which was waged between April 22 and August 12 of that year resulting in the ceding to the United States of the Philippines, Guam, Porto Rico, and all the Spanish West Indies possessions, and the recognition of Cuba as an independent territory under protection of the United States. Following a call for troops by President William McKinley, April 23, a Rhode Island regiment of infantry

30. P.L., 1890, chapter 873.

31. The burying ground was conveyed, in 1791, to the town of North Providence by Esek Hopkins and was re-annexed to Providence in 1874. Upon its abandonment the bodies were removed to North Burial Ground.

32. A.&R., July 1, 1892, January session, 1898. See map, page 130.

33. P.L., 1900, chapter 798.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

volunteers was organized under Colonel Charles W. Abbot, but saw no active service.

The Classic revival in American architecture, originating in the eighties, was stimulated by the architects of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 who designed most of the buildings in the style of the Italian Renaissance. Its effect on Providence architecture is reflected in a number of institutional and public buildings designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson. The Home for Aged Men (1891)³⁴ at 807 Broad Street, Saint Maria's Home for Working Girls (1893) at 175 Governor Street and Rhode Island School for the Deaf (1895)³⁵ at



R.I.H.S.

Providence Public Library, 1900, 229 Washington Street.

520 Hope Street are symmetrical in plan with red brick walls, hipped roofs, Classic details and academic porches. The Telephone Building³⁶ at 112 Union Street and the Central

34. The Home for Aged Men was incorporated 1875 and first located at 63 Chestnut Street. The Broad Street building was financed by funds provided in a bequest by Henry J. Steere. An infirmary was added later. The name was changed in 1908 to the Home for Aged Men and Aged Couples.

35. The School for the Deaf was established in 1876 and maintained as a free school for children with defective hearing.

36. Telephone cables from the main switchboard, carried through the basement, were laid in cement-lined iron pipes underground in the principal streets of the city and were extended to overhead wires in other sections. About 7,500 stations were in operation in 1893. The Telephone Company later moved its offices to 234 Washington Street; the Union Street building is now used for business purposes.

1890 - 1900

Police Station (page 184) at 153 Fountain Street, both erected in 1893, are yellow brick. The facade of the former is ornamented with terra cotta, including a row of Corinthian pilasters over two stories of rusticated work; the latter building is composed of a central block and two wings with academic Renaissance details executed in limestone. The firm's outstanding achievement was the Providence Public Library³⁷ at 229 Washington Street, designed in the style of the Italian Renaissance (illustration, page 186) and opened in 1900, its yellow brick and limestone walls rusticated in the first story and treated in the second story in a manner reminiscent of the Library of Saint Mark in Venice.



R.I.H.S.

Robert W. Taft house, 1895, 154 Hope Street.

The trend toward a Colonial revival in domestic architecture was first manifest by symmetry in plan and the abandonment of towers and other forms of adornment. A distinguishing characteristic of the early nineties was the hipped roof with its many dormers and high chimneys. This is noted in such contrasting dwellings as the Shaw house at 126 Melrose Street, with its bracketed cornice, large paned windows and buttressed dormers,

37. Providence Public Library, incorporated 1875, established its first quarters June 1, 1877 at the corner of Weybosset and Orange streets in which year William E. Foster commenced a period as librarian which continued for 53 years. It was moved to Butler Exchange in 1878, and to the first story of the English and Classical School building on Snow Street (page 152) in 1880. A large addition to the Public Library was dedicated in 1954 (page 285).

WEYBOSSET SIDE

and the clapboarded Kimball house at 120 Brown Street whose Ionic entrance porch is flanked by small-lighted Colonial windows. A closer approach to the Colonial is the gambrel-roofed Metcalf house at 132 Bowen Street (Andrews, Jacques and Rantoul of Boston, architects) in which adherence to tradition is offset only by bay windows flanking the Classic entrance porch and the use of large panes in the lower window sashes. The full traditional flavor was effected by Stone, Carpenter and Willson in the design of two brick dwellings of the period, namely, the three-story monitor-roofed Smith house (c. 1890) at 112 Benevolent Street, reminiscent of the works of John Holden Greene, and the Taft house (1895) at 154 Hope Street (illustration, page 187), whose curved gable ends somewhat resemble those of the pre-Revolutionary Joseph Brown house (page 51) on South Main Street.

The business buildings of the period were varied in style. The J. B. Barnaby Company (now Kennedy's Clothiers, Inc.), at Westminster and Dorrance streets, followed the extravagant motives of its predecessor (1876) which was destroyed in a spectacular fire December 13, 1890. The Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company, incorporated in 1867 as a pecuniary helper to the hospital of that name (page 137), erected a bank and office building at 15 Westminster Street in 1891, designed by R. W. Gibson of New York. Its five-story facade, with closely spaced windows, contained Romanesque motives which were followed when an addition, with a massive arched-portal, was erected in 1903 (Peabody and Stearns of Boston, architects, illustration, page 183).³⁸ The Industrial Trust Company (established 1887) acquired a four-story building at 49 Westminster Street³⁹ which was remodeled in 1892 (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects), extended northerly along Exchange Street to Exchange Place, and raised to a height of eight stories, with a heavy bronze cornice above the street facades (illustration, page 248). Tilden-Thurber Company erected a small four-story store at 292 Westminster Street in 1895, designed in the French Renaissance style by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge of Boston, its lower stories having display windows framed by ornamental iron and its upper stories composed of engaged fluted-and-banded columns and an entablature in the Ionic order. The Old Stone Bank (page 126) at 86 South Main Street, was remodeled and enlarged in 1898 (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects), including the erection of an entrance portico in the Italian Renaissance style (illustration, page 125) and a large bronze dome rising above an attic.

A ten-story fireproof office building, designed by Winslow and Bigelow of Boston, was erected by the Joseph Banigan estate in 1896, on the lot bounded by Weybosset Street, Post Office Court, Dyer Street and Exchange Street.⁴⁰ The walls were built of Stony Creek Connecticut granite with arched entrances provided on Weybosset and Exchange streets, and the building was crowned by a heavy ornamental bronze cornice (illustration, page 189). Access to the 420 rooms and offices was provided by means of two stairways and five elevators. First known as Banigan Building, the name was changed in 1910 to Grosvenor Building, and in 1955 to Amica Building.

The brick Manufacturers Building, seven stories high and over one acre in area, was erected by Kent and Stanley, manufacturing jewelers, in 1892, with arched granite entrances

38. The building was replaced by the present Hospital Trust Building in 1918 (page 228).

39. This building, designed by Alpheus C. Morse c. 1870 stood on the site of the former Hamilton Building (page 136). The Industrial Trust Building was enlarged on the east in 1910, the addition including a new entrance portal flanked by two-story Corinthian columns. The Trust Company vacated the building on completion of the new Industrial Trust Building in 1928 (page 247).

40. The building replaced an old barrack, formerly Washington Hotel (page 121). A part of the site was taken by the city for widening Dunnell's Gangway to become an extension of Exchange Street.

1890 - 1900

located at 101 Sabin Street and 7 Beverly Street for the use of owners and tenants. It was said to be the largest building in the world, at that time, devoted exclusively to jewelry manufacture. A contrasting type of industrial design, adapted for the first time in Providence, was the structural steel and ribbed-glass machine shop erected by Fuller Iron Works (page 174) at the corner of South Main and Tockwotton streets in 1893; it was still standing a half-century later, its walls covered with asphalt shingles.

The ecclesiastical architecture of the nineties represented a considerable range in styles. The Church of the Messiah⁴¹ at Westminster and Troy streets (Peabody and Stearns, architects, c. 1890) and Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church⁴² at Broadway and Barton streets (James Murphy, architect, 1864-1901) are stone Gothic buildings, the former having a front gable, crowned by an open bell tower, and the latter with a square corner tower. Saint Edward's Church⁴³ at 991 Branch Avenue (James Murphy, architect, 1889) is French



R.I.H.S.

View of Dyer and Westminster streets c. 1905, showing Banigan (Grosvenor, Amica) Building (1896) left, and R. I. Hospital Trust Building as enlarged (1903) right.

Gothic and has a central front tower and spire. Among the Romanesque buildings are Saint James Episcopal Church⁴⁴ at Broadway and Courtland streets (C. Howard Walker of Boston, architect, c. 1890), a brick and limestone structure with corner tower and open belfry; Cranston Street Roger Williams Baptist Church (A. B. Jennings of New York, architect, 1892), a granite building with pedimented facade flanked by turreted towers; the Church of the Blessed Sacrament at Academy Avenue and Regent Street (Heins and LaFarge of New York, architects, 1897-1905), a brick and terra cotta structure with a campanile rising to a height of 136 feet (illustration, page 190); and Holy Name Church on Camp Street (A. J. Murphy, architect, 1896-1900), a limestone edifice with a campanile,

41. The parish was established in the Olneyville district in 1856.

42. The church was completed under supervision of A. J. Murphy, nephew of the original architect.

43. Upon completion of the church an adjacent building, which had served both as a church and school since 1867, was used exclusively as Saint Edward's Parochial School until replaced by a new schoolhouse in 1907.

44. This became the Church of the Saviour (colored) and, more recently, Saint Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church.

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combining elements of Italian Romanesque and Renaissance.⁴⁵ The Central Congregational Church at Angell Street and Diman Place (Carrère and Hastings of New York, architects, 1893) which succeeded the building erected on Benefit Street in 1856 (page 127), is a brick and terra cotta building in the style of the Spanish Renaissance with a facade composed of a pediment flanked by towers and a large round dome, crowned by a lantern, supported by piers and pendentives, rising above the auditorium (illustration, page 191). In contrast with these ecclesiastical styles is the Mathewson Street Methodist Church (1895) whose Classic facade blends with the adjacent commercial buildings.⁴⁶



Blessed Sacrament Church, 1905, Academy Avenue.

Substantial advances were made in hospital facilities, due largely to the generosity of benefactors. Rhode Island Hospital (page 137) acquired four buildings, all designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson, including the Royal C. Taft Building for Outpatients, given by Thomas P. I. Goddard and furnished by Mrs. Elizabeth A. Shepard, and erected near the main entrance in 1891; a Nurses' Home, erected on Lockwood Street in 1893 with funds provided under the wills of Mr. and Mrs. George Ide Chace; a building for contagious

45. Parochial schools were later established by Blessed Sacrament in 1924 on Regent Avenue (John W. Donahue, architect) and by Holy Name in 1939 at 109 Camp Street (O'Malley and Fitzsimmons, architects).

46. Mathewson Street Church was organized in 1848 and its first building erected 1851. The facade of the new building was altered in 1950 (page 283).

1890 - 1900

diseases, constructed in 1895 under municipal financing; and Southwest Pavilion, a five-story building for women and children, erected in 1900. Among the numerous additions to Butler Hospital (page 119) were Sawyer Memorial Ward (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects, 1888); Goddard House (Hoppin and Ely, architects, 1898), donated by William Goddard, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Shepard and Moses B. I. Goddard; and Weld House (Hoppin and Ely, architects, 1900), the gift of Mrs. William G. Weld in memory of her husband. Saint Joseph's Hospital was established by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rhode Island which purchased, in 1871, the former Cyrus Harris estate of two acres at 573 Broad Street and remodeled the dwelling⁴⁷ for hospital uses. A new brick building was erected on the



R.I.H.S.

Central Congregational Church, 1893, Angell Street.

south portion of the estate, facing Peace Street, in 1893 (William R. Walker and Son, architects), with a three-story piazza facing a garden on the east.

When the centennial of the establishment of free public schools was observed in 1899 the school department, under superintendence of Horace S. Tarbell, was operating four high schools, 16 grammar schools and 88 primary schools with a total enrollment of 23,000 pupils, one-sixth of whom attended evening school. The city erected 30 of these schools during the nineties, several replacing obsolete buildings. It was not until 1896 that the policy was established of constructing all schoolhouses of brick, and at the close of the century nearly one-half of the buildings in operation were wood. Among the new buildings

47. A square brick house with a low hipped roof and cupola, designed about 1870 by Perez Mason.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

were the Manual Training High School and Classical High School, both located in proximity to the former high school,⁴⁸ and Hope Street High School, erected on the East Side, opposite Hope Reservoir. The Manual Training School (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects, 1893) on Pond Street reflects, by its Classic cornice and round-arched openings of the main entrance and third story windows, a transition from the French Romanesque style to that of the Classic Renaissance.⁴⁹ Classical High School (southwest corner of Pond and Summer streets, 1897) and Hope Street High School (1898, illustration below), both designed by Martin and Hall, were similar in plan, each having a center section comprising an assembly room, offices, and a library, flanked by classroom wings with basement gymnasiums and



R.I.H.S.

Hope Street High School, 1898.

lunch rooms. Both buildings have hipped roofs and the exterior walls are brick with limestone trimmings, broken by Classic entrances and clusters of five windows in each of the principal rooms.⁵⁰

Two buildings on the Brown campus, a physics laboratory and a gymnasium, each reflecting elements of Romanesque architecture, were completed in 1891, shortly after Dr.

48. See page 150. The Summer Street building was known thereafter as English High School until Central High School was opened in 1923; since then it has been identified as Central Annex A (page 243).

49. A heating plant was conveyed to the city by the Harris Steam Engine Company December 14, 1892. A large addition was made to the building in 1908 (Fred E. Field, architect), extending it westerly to Summer Street and the school subsequently was named Technical High School. It has been used since 1936 for administrative offices of the school department.

50. A new Hope High School was erected on Hope Reservoir site in 1938 (page 264), and the former building was used in 1950 by the United States Veterans Administration.

1890 - 1900

E. Benjamin Andrews had become president of the university. Wilson Hall, named for George F. Wilson who had bequeathed a sum to the university to promote the study of natural sciences, was erected on the middle campus, south of Sayles Hall, from plans drawn by Gould and Angell with the assistance of Professor Eli Whitney Blake of the Physics Department. Lyman Gymnasium (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects) was built



R.I.H.S.

Rhode Island School of Design, 1892, 21 Waterman Street.

adjacent to Lincoln Field⁵¹ with funds provided under the will of Daniel Wanton Lyman.⁵² Women were admitted to the university, in 1892, and classes were held for them, until 1897,

51. Lincoln Field, named for Professor John L. Lincoln, extended easterly from the gymnasium to Thayer Street and was used for athletic sports until 1899 when Andrews Field, a ten-acre tract on Camp Street, was developed and named in honor of ex-President Andrews.

52. Colgate Hoyt Swimming Pool was added to the gymnasium in 1903.

WEYBOSSET SIDE

in a small building at 235 Benefit Street, formerly the home of a private school for girls.⁵³ A permanent building for the Women's College was erected on Meeting Street, through the auspices of the Rhode Island Society for the Collegiate Education of Women, and was opened November 22, 1897. It was designed in the English University style of the 16th century by Stone, Carpenter and Willson and named Pembroke Hall after the college at Cambridge attended by Roger Williams.

Rhode Island School of Design, established in 1878 in the Hoppin Homestead Building (page 155) on Westminster Street, erected the first unit of its present group on Waterman Street in 1892 (illustrations, pages 193, 215), the gift of Jesse Metcalf. The Building, containing a museum, offices and class rooms, was designed by Hoppin, Reid and Hoppin in the French Romanesque style with rounded window openings and a corbeled brick cornice. By 1900 the school had an enrollment of 500 pupils.

A Normal School (Martin and Hall, architects) was erected by the state on a site bounded by Francis, Gaspee, Promenade, Park and Lincoln streets, on a part of which the former State Prison (page 108) had stood. The plan comprised a central building and three wings and the exterior was designed in the style of the Classic revival with yellow brick and terra cotta walls (illustration, page 250). On its completion in 1898 the school was moved from its former location on Benefit Street (page 152). It was incorporated as Rhode Island College of Education in 1920 and a new building, Henry Barnard School (William R. Walker and Son, architects), was erected on the campus in 1922.⁵⁴

Several important highways on Weybosset Side had been changed in name since the official listing adopted by the Town Council in 1807 (page 73). Weybosset Street, as defined that year, branched from Westminster Street at Turks Head and extended westerly to re-intersect Westminster at the present Cathedral Square; the highway beyond that intersection was named High Street as far as the junction with Cranston Street, and Johnston Road from that point to Olneyville; Pawtuxet Street branched southerly from Weybosset Street at Chestnut Street. Part of Weybosset Street was re-named about 1923, the section from Dorrance to Chestnut becoming Broad Street and the section from Chestnut to Westminster changed to High Street and extended to Olneyville. The 1850 directory defined Broad Street as running from Westminster Street (Turks Head) to the city line at Grace Church Cemetery, eliminating the names Weybosset Street and Pawtuxet Street. By 1857 the name Weybosset Street had been resumed from Turks Head to Dorrance Street. The final adjustment of names was made about 1893 when Weybosset Street reverted to its 1807 status, Broad Street branched southerly from Weybosset at Chestnut, Westminster Street ran from Market Square to Olneyville, and the name High Street was abandoned.

The culminating achievement of the 19th century was the erection of the State House. The former capitol, erected as the Colony House in 1762 and twice enlarged (page 39), had become inadequate for modern requirements, in consideration of which the General Assembly appointed a commission in 1891 to select a site and obtain plans for a new building. The site chosen was on Smith's Hill (formerly known as Jefferson Plains), overlooking the former cove lands from the north, as recommended by the Public Park Association.⁵⁵ The

53. The Young Ladies School was founded by John Kingsbury about 1828 and the wood schoolhouse on Benefit Street was built in 1848 (Thomas A. Tefft, architect). It was taken over by Professor Lincoln in 1858 as a girls' high school. The schoolhouse was razed in 1924 when a building was erected on the site for the Rhode Island College of Pharmacy.

54. Plans for a new building were under way in 1957.

55. Public Park Association, *Tract No. 10*, 1892.

state purchased a six-acre tract to which ten additional acres were added, by gift of the city, for the development of the grounds, providing a site bounded by Smith, Francis and Gaspee streets.

The State House Commission conducted a competition for the design of the building in which a number of the country's leading architects participated. Following the submission of plans January 14, 1892, the award was made to McKim, Mead and White of New York. A Board of State House Commissioners was appointed the following year to erect the building.⁵⁶ Ground was broken September 16, 1895, the cornerstone laid by the Grand Master of Masons October 15, 1896, and the building was occupied by the General Assembly, Governor William Gregory and other state officials January 1, 1901.⁵⁷ The building, with terrace approaches and grounds as completed, was delivered to the state June 11, 1904.

The white marble State House (see frontispiece) is composed of three juxtaposed units, surrounded by a terrace, the elevation of which is 78 feet above mean high water. From the central unit a marble dome, 50 feet in diameter, rises to a height of 149 feet above the terrace. Over the dome are a gallery, a lantern, and a bronze statue symbolizing the "Independent Man." The total length of the building, including the wings, is 333 feet and the depth of the central part is 180 feet. The design is Classic Renaissance. The first story walls are broken by round-arched windows and doors, and the upper stories are composed of Classic orders and embellished by Corinthian pilasters and columns. Similar columns surround the base of the main dome and the bases of the four miniature domes below it. Flat domes rise over the two assembly rooms in the wings. Wide, monumental steps lead from the grounds to the south entrance, and a porte-cochère forms an entrance on the north.

Under the state constitution, adopted in 1842, sessions of the General Assembly were held in the five county seats, Newport, Providence, South Kingstown, Bristol, and East Greenwich. Constitutional amendments confined the sessions to Newport and Providence in 1854 and to Providence alone in 1900. Thus with the opening of the State House Providence became the sole capital of Rhode Island.

56. P.L., 1893, chapter 1201. The commissioners included Herbert W. Ladd, William Ames, Olney Arnold, Albert L. Sayles, Francis L. O'Reilly, John W. Davis, George Peabody Wetmore, Nathaniel B. Church, Joshua Wilbur, Enos Lapham, Rowland G. Hazard, D. Russell Brown and Ellery H. Wilson.

57. Three other governors were concerned in the erection of the State House, namely, D. Russell Brown (1892-95), Charles Warren Lippitt (1895-97) and Elisha Dyer (1897-1900).

MAP OF THE
CITY OF PROVIDENCE,
RHODE ISLAND.



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PART III

East Side, West Side

CHAPTER 16 1900 - 1910

THE 20th century opened officially in Providence with the inauguration of Daniel L. D. Granger as mayor, January 7, 1901. The city had an area of about 18½ square miles including 225 miles of received streets and 528 acres of land dedicated to park purposes (see map, page 196). Its population, according to the 1900 Federal census, was 175,597, constituting two-fifths of all the people in Rhode Island.

Providence had become a trading center of a metropolitan area which was broadened, as suburban railway lines were established, to include most of Rhode Island as well as a considerable area of southern Massachusetts. Generally speaking, however, the city's streets were only wide enough to meet the necessities of a small town and were entirely inadequate for the coming invasion of automobiles.

Nature had imposed two obstacles to an easy and uninterrupted flow of traffic, namely, the waterways and the hillside topography of the East Side. For the awkward highway plan, the narrow streets, and the traffic barriers imposed by the railroads, succeeding town and city councils were primarily responsible.

The hillside pattern of the East Side originated in the 17th century home lots (page 10) and the highways, later constructed, were laid out along the old lot lines with little attempt to provide easy grades. The only direct street railway transportation between the business area and the heart of the East Side was effected by means of cable cars, and later by counterweights, on College Hill (pages 162, 179). The problem of the waterways had been solved, in part, by the erection of bridges and by confining the cove waters to river canals. The construction of the cove basin and its later abandonment (pages 115, 179), however, proved to be both ill-advised and costly. The arrangement and width of many secondary streets originated in private subdivision platting over which the city failed to exercise adequate control (pages 121, 143).

In permitting the railroads to run their tracks at grade for a distance of seven miles through the city the City Council not only created a new impediment to highway circulation but sanctioned a development which led, inevitably, to a widespread area of slums. In approving the terminal development plan late in the century, by which a railroad viaduct was erected and freight yards established near the civic center, the Council effectively blocked any plan for integrating the State House approaches with Exchange Place (page 165).

Having overcome some of the traffic obstacles imposed by the rivers, the city was remiss in its failure to take steps for the conservation and development of the inland

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waterways and tidewater areas. The Woonasquatucket, Moshassuck and West river valleys, already largely industrialized, were allowed to degenerate into areas of blight while the river banks, washed by polluted waters, became dumping grounds. Undeveloped sections of the tidewater shores of Providence and Seekonk rivers were equally neglected. Only about one-sixth of the shore property, abutting the harbor line a distance of seven miles from Field's Point to Pawtucket, was under municipal ownership, including Blackstone Park (page 147), the bridge approaches, the City Dock (page 181), Field's Point estate,¹ and the sewage disposal plant (page 182). The city had relinquished opportunities to control and develop other tidewater shore areas, notably the South Water Street district (page 83) and the west shore from the City Dock to Sassafras Point.²

Dredging operations were carried out in Providence river under the Federal Rivers and Harbors act of 1896, whereby the harbor was widened to 400 feet and deepened to 25 feet from Sassafras Point southerly to deep waters of Narragansett bay, opposite Conimicut Point; and under succeeding acts of 1902 and 1907 anchorage areas 25 feet in depth were provided for practically the full width of the harbor north of Sassafras Point.

Steamboat lines were extremely active during this period. The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad had acquired the Providence line of the Providence and Stonington Steamship Company and operated the *Plymouth* and *Connecticut* from Fox Point Wharf (see map, page 220) to New York. The railroad also maintained the Narragansett Bay Line to New York on which the old steamboats *Massachusetts* and *Rhode Island* were run, at lower rates, from Lonsdale Wharf on India Street. Two independent lines to New York — the Joy Line and the Enterprise Line — ran from South Water Street docks, south of Point Street Bridge. Steamships were run by the Providence, Norfolk and Baltimore Line, the Boston and Philadelphia Steamship Company, and the Clyde Line to Wilmington, North Carolina, from wharves on India Street.

The local steamboat lines docked in the upper harbor above Point Street Bridge.³ The Providence, Fall River and Newport Steamboat Company's principal wharf was on Dyer Street, opposite Hay Street, from which point steamboats made regular and excursion trips to Field's Point, Crescent Park,⁴ Rocky Point, Prudence Park, Conanicut Park, Newport, Narragansett Pier, and other shore places. The fleet included the *Bay Queen*, *City of Newport*, *Day Star*,⁵ *What Cheer*, *Squantum*, *Pomham*, and *Baltimore*. The same company operated the *Mount Hope* to Block Island and the *Richard Borden* to Fall River, from wharves on South Water Street, south of Crawford Bridge. The Seaconnet Steamboat Company ran the *Islander* to Sakonnet from Doane's Wharf, opposite Planet Street. And from docks farther south on South Water Street the *Corsair* made trips to Saunderstown

1. See page 147. Most of the land at Field's Point was leased as a shore resort, where Colonel Atwell's clam bakes were a specialty.

2. See page 182. Commenting upon the activities of the Federal Government, in providing anchorage areas and straightening the ship channel, Mayor Patrick J. McCarthy stated, in his inaugural address January 7, 1907, that "all natural avenues of trade and commerce should be owned by the municipality, especially commercial navigable waterfronts, for harbor and dock purposes . . . The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad now controls the steam and street railways of the state . . . It has acquired rights in Providence river and is rapidly getting more . . . We should acquire the harbor rights for the people of greater Providence and future Rhode Island."

3. The Commissioner of Public Works reported that 23,248 craft passed through Point Street Bridge in 1900, including steamboats, tow boats, sailing vessels and barges. See illustration, page 232.

4. An amusement resort at the north end of Bullock's Point.

5. The *Day Star* was partially burned, rebuilt, and re-christened *Warwick*.

and the *New Shoreham* ran to Block Island. Over a million and a quarter passengers were carried annually over these bay lines.

At the opening of the century the Union Railroad Company was operating electric cars on the former horse car routes (page 179) to which several lines had been added. On the College Hill system lines were now extended over Butler Avenue and Blackstone Boulevard to Swan Point Cemetery; on Elmgrove Avenue to Sessions Street; and on Brown and Camp streets to Andrews Field (page 193). Cars branched from the North Main Street route over Olney and Camp streets, and over Charles and Admiral streets and Douglas Avenue. The tracks were relaid on Exchange Place, extending around the railroad station approaches and underpassing the station at Francis Street to connect with the Smith Street route. The Union Railroad Company also operated suburban lines running, respectively, to Saylesville by way of Silver Spring and Smithfield avenues; to Rumford and Phillipsdale over Red Bridge; to Riverside and Crescent Park by way of Washington Bridge; to Centredale over Smith Street; and to the Pawtuxet Valley mill villages of Pontiac, Natick and Riverpoint over Reservoir and Pontiac avenues.

Three longer suburban lines were operated by the Rhode Island Suburban Railroad Company,⁶ including the Warwick and Oakland Beach Railroad (page 156) which was taken over from the New York, New Haven and Hartford in 1900 and extended to Buttonwoods on Cowesett bay; a railway running over Elmwood Avenue and the Post Road to East Greenwich, where connection was made with the Sea View Railroad to Narragansett Pier; and the line to Bristol which followed the Crescent Park route and continued over highways through Barrington and Warren. Interstate lines operating on the rails of the Union Railroad Company in Providence included the Providence and Fall River ("snake line") and the Providence and Taunton, both leaving the city by Washington Bridge, and the Providence and Danielson which followed Hartford Avenue.

The Union Railroad Company leased its system in 1902 to the Rhode Island Company, an operating concern chartered that year, the stock of which was controlled by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. That company secured a lease of the Rhode Island Suburban Railroad Company and the Pawtucket Street Railway Company and controlled various other lines in the state. By the year 1910 the system of out-of-town lines, radiating from Providence, was extended to the Attleboros, Woonsocket, Worcester, Chepachet, and Pascoag.

Automobiles were in operation on the city streets in 1900, but not in numbers sufficient to constitute a traffic problem.⁷ A small percentage of the people owned horses, carriages and sleighs and these facilities were available for hire at numerous livery stables. Horse-drawn trucks, carts and moving vans were operated for the transportation of freight and merchandise in the city and freight cars, hauled by strings of horses, were drawn over the rails on certain highways. Bicycles were seen in great numbers. The first public control of automobiles was effected in 1904, in which year the General Assembly provided for the registration of motor vehicles and the licensing of their operators under direction of the secretary of state. In 1908 the control was transferred to the state board of public roads, established that year.⁸

6. The Union Railroad Company and the Rhode Island Suburban Railway Company both were controlled by the United Traction and Electric Company, a syndicate organized in 1893.

7. The first recorded automobile fatality occurred at Roger Williams Park in the summer of 1902 when a sightseeing car, operated by the Providence Auto and Transportation Company, caught fire and burned one of the passengers, resulting in her death a few days later.

8. P.L., 1902, chapter 84; 1908, chapter 1592.

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

Traffic congestion on the streets of Providence became a major civic problem with the expansion of the system of suburban street railway lines. The radial plan of the city, originating in the old country roads and turnpikes (page 84), was sound in theory in providing direct access from the civic center to outlying districts. In practice, however, the streets were too narrow for an easy flow of traffic and, in most cases, only single lines of tracks were permitted, with turnouts at intervals. As nearly all of the suburban lines terminated in the center of the city it was in that area that the congestion was most acute.

Several highway projects, financed by loans authorized by the General Assembly, were carried out by the city for providing better means of circulation and relief from traffic congestion. Among the more important were the widening of South Main, Hope and Eddy streets. South Main Street, constituting the southerly end of the original Towne street, was an important artery for traffic headed for the Fox Point and India Street docks and Washington Bridge. Although several times altered in lines and contours it still retained, at the opening of the century, an irregularity in width ranging from 40 to 60 feet. The street was widened, between 1902 and 1905, to a uniform width of 60 feet between Crawford and Transit streets, and an outlet was provided to South Water Street by widening Crawford Street to 80 feet. The Hope Street project was confined to the northerly section from Rochambeau Avenue to the Pawtucket line which was widened, in 1905, from 40 to 60 feet, conforming to the width of the highway southerly to Olney Street.⁹ Electric cars were run over Hope Street to Pawtucket to provide service for this rapidly-growing residential area. The section of Eddy Street, from Dyer to Crary, over which freight cars were run on spur tracks to industrial plants and docks, was widened between 1906 and 1911 to 60 feet.

Exchange Place, at the opening of the century, was an undeveloped area, 250 feet wide and 1200 feet long, extending from City Hall to Canal Street. Near the easterly end, now identified as Memorial Square, was an open water area between Burnside and Exchange bridges (see map, page 164), over a portion of which the fire station stood on pile foundations. In front of it was the Burnside monument (page 175) and at the western end of Exchange Place stood the Soldiers and Sailors monument (page 149). The remainder of the area was paved from curb to curb with granite blocks.

On a tract of land on the north border of Exchange Place, near the east end of the new railroad buildings and formerly a part of the Cove Promenade, a new Central Fire Station was erected, financed by a loan authorized by the General Assembly June 13, 1900. It was a three-story brick and limestone building with a bell tower, designed by Martin and Hall.¹⁰ Upon its completion and occupancy, March 26, 1903, the former station was sold at public auction and subsequently removed.

A bridge, later identified as Post Office Bridge, was built across Providence river between Burnside and Exchange bridges in 1904, filling the last gap of a span, 1147 feet in width, extending from the head of navigation at Crawford Street to the railroad viaduct (see map, page 144). Point Street Bridge (page 145) was rebuilt in 1907 with a 40-foot roadway between curbs and a swing span of 284 feet.

Landscape improvements were made in City Hall Park (dedicated to park purposes, 1892), situated between Exchange Place and the railroad station, including the layout of

9. This section of Hope Street originally was the East Turnpike (page 85), freed and named East Avenue in 1872, and re-named Hope Street in 1900. Rochambeau Avenue, previously known as Hearnden's Lane, Harrington's Lane, and North Street, was named in honor of Comte de Rochambeau (page 53) about 1895.

10. See illustration, page 216. The building was razed, in 1938, and on its site the Federal Building Annex was built (page 262).

flower gardens and the planting of oak trees (illustration, page 250). A fountain, designed by Enid Yandell, was erected in the center of the area in 1902, the gift of Paul Bajnotti in memory of his wife (page 206). The central group, cast in bronze, symbolizes "the struggle for life." In 1906 the Soldiers and Sailors monument was taken down and rebuilt on a spot in the center of Exchange Place, midway between Dorrance and Exchange streets, and the Burnside monument was moved to City Hall Park. The Scout Monument, designed by Henri Schönhardt, was erected in the park in 1911 and dedicated to Major Henry H. Young for valor in the Civil War.

In 1903 the United States Treasury Department conducted an architectural competition for the design of a Federal Building, to be located on land given by the city in the center of the portion of Exchange Place extending 200 feet east from Exchange Street. The award was made to Clarke and Howe, whose design followed an adaptation of the Classic style exemplified by contemporary buildings in Washington (illustration, page 216). The length of Exchange Place was now shortened to 900 feet, including two roadways flanking the new building, and the area extending from that building to Canal Street was named Post Office Square, later changed to Memorial Square. The Federal Building, opened in 1908, housed the post office, the Federal Court and the customs department which were removed from the former Federal Building on Weybosset Street (page 129). The customs service was returned to the Weybosset Street building in 1922.

A viaduct was built by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad north of Post Office Square, constituting an eyesore that still prevails in that conspicuous spot. Starting from the train sheds in the Union Station, it cut through a section of the old merchandise depot (page 115) and overpassed Canal and North Main streets. A tunnel was constructed through the East Side, its west portal adjacent to the rear of the Art Club between North Main and Benefit, and its east portal east of Ives Street. From that portal a causeway was carried to the harbor line from which a steel bridge, with lift-draw, was constructed across Seekonk river. Railroad tracks were laid from the Union Station to connect with the Warren and Bristol branch in East Providence, and were opened for service November 15, 1908 at which time the old Fox Point depot (page 119) was abandoned.¹¹

Improvements to the water supply system were undertaken in 1902 for the purpose of clarifying the polluted waters of Pawtuxet river. A slow sand filtration plant, capable of filtering 20 million gallons daily, was constructed near Pettaconsett Pumping Station (page 135), and put in operation in 1905.

Work on the sewage disposal works at Sassafras Point (page 182) was continued with the construction of a chemical precipitation plant. Upon its completion in 1901 the sludge process was put in operation with the effluent outfall and storm sewage discharging into Providence river. Trunk sewers were laid in the Woonasquatucket, Moshassuck and West river districts in 1903 for the purpose of averting the discharge of sewage and mill waste into those rivers.

The placing of high-tension wires underground, in the downtown area, was completed in 1901. In that year the Narragansett Electric Lighting Company operated about 1900 arc lights on the principal highways and 1850 incandescent lamps on secondary streets. In outlying areas 800 gas lights were maintained by the Welsbach Street Lighting Company.¹²

Control of the police department, by act of the General Assembly November 22, 1901,

11. Passenger service on the Providence, Warren and Bristol branch was discontinued in July, 1937, since which time the tunnel has been used only for occasional freight traffic.

12. From Mayor Augustus S. Miller's inaugural address in *City Manual*, 1903.



R.I.H.S.
View of Seekonk river bridges from East Providence c. 1910. Providence, Warren & Bristol Railroad bridge and Washington Bridge (1885) in foreground. Tunnel bridge (1908) and Red Bridge (1895) in distance.

was placed in charge of a board of three commissioners whose members were appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Under an amended act, passed in 1906, appointments to the commission were made by the mayor with the approval of the Board of Aldermen. In 1902 a brick police station was erected for the seventh district at the corner of Hamilton Street and Potter's Avenue.

In addition to the new Central Fire Station (page 200), completed in 1903, new fire stations were erected on Laurel Hill Avenue and Douglas Avenue (both designed by Sanders and Thornton, 1902), Mount Pleasant Avenue (1904), Humboldt Avenue (E. T. Banning, architect, 1907), and Point Street (1908).

About 90 acres of land were added to the city's park estates during the first decade of the century. Blackstone Park (page 147) was enlarged in 1903 by purchase of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of shore property on its northern border. Two tracts aggregating 40 acres west of Plainfield Street, including a part of Neutaconkanut Hill,¹³ were purchased, through park loans approved by the General Assembly in 1903 and 1906, for the establishment of Neutaconkanut Hill Park. By resolution of the City Council, in 1904, $3\frac{1}{2}$ remaining acres of the former Cove basin were dedicated to park purposes and designated the Public Garden. Tockwotton Park playground (page 165) was extended easterly 100 feet to Ives Street in 1907. The city acquired two adjacent parcels of land on Admiral Street, including the Esek Hopkins house (1756), by deeds of gift from Mrs. Elizabeth A. Gould in 1907 and Marshall Hopkins Gould in 1908; the joint estate, comprising $6\frac{1}{2}$ acres, was dedicated February 19, 1909 and named Hopkins Park. A strip of land, 17 acres in extent and from 100 to 200 feet in width, following the course of a stream from Promenade Street to Academy Avenue, was purchased by the city and named Pleasant Valley Parkway in 1909. Seven tracts of land, aggregating about ten acres, were dedicated for playgrounds between 1902 and 1906; one of these, in the Olneyville district, was donated by Sarah J. Eddy; two were properties already owned by the city, and the remainder were purchased.

The park treatment of Blackstone Boulevard (page 177) was completed in 1904. Following the extension of the electric car line through the parkway to Swan Point Cemetery a trolley shelter was erected at the terminus by that corporation.

Roger Williams Park was benefited by a large bequest of Anna H. Man, in whose honor the city erected a bronze memorial gateway at the Elmwood Avenue entrance in 1903. In that year a statue of the Pancreatist, a replica of the Greek masterpiece, was set up near the boat house, a gift of Paul Bajnotti. On a small knoll, overlooking one of the lakes, a circular seat was erected as a memorial to Richard H. Deming, park commissioner, 1891-1902, upon which was mounted a bust of Deming.

The theatres operating during this period included Providence Opera House on Dorrance Street (plays, operas and musical shows); Keith's Opera House, 260 Westminster Street (vaudeville, except in summer seasons when plays were given by the Albee Stock Company); Westminster Theatre, "The Sink," 368 Westminster Street (burlesque); Empire Theatre, 412 Westminster Street (popular-priced drama); and Imperial Theatre, 569 $\frac{1}{2}$ Westminster Street (varied entertainments).¹⁴ The earliest motion pictures were shown at

13. The hill was mentioned as one of the bounds in the deed executed by the Indians in 1637. See page 4.

14. The Imperial Theatre (W. H. Colwell, architect, 1902), later known, successively, as the Colonial and the Capitol, became a motion picture house; it was still in operation in 1955. Providence Opera House (page 153) was razed in 1931. The Empire, opened in 1898, was torn down when Empire Street was constructed in 1915 (page 215). Westminster Theatre (page 161) was converted for movies in 1915 under the name of Empire Theatre, later known as the Bijou; it was razed in 1950. Keith's (page 160), re-christened the Empire in 1935, was replaced by the W. T. Grant Building in 1949.

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

Keith's as the American Biograph. Several picture houses were established in downtown buildings between 1907 and 1910, including Casino Theatre at 126 Mathewson Street, Bijou Theatre at 156 Westminster Street, Bullock's Temple at 34 Richmond Street (formerly the Richmond Street Congregational Church), and Scenic Theatre at 121 Mathewson Street (formerly Westminster Congregational Church).¹⁵

There were a number of small assembly halls in Providence at this time, used for dances, chamber concerts, and other social gatherings. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel D. Spink erected a dance hall, about 1891, at the rear of their dwelling at 183 Weybosset Street for a dancing school that was used also for private dances.¹⁶ The Trocadero, lavishly decorated with mirrors and gilded relief work, occupied the rear end of the Burrill Building (1891) at 291 Westminster Street, with an entrance on Mathewson Street;¹⁷ the Trocadero Ball was a leading social event for a number of years. The Eloise was established in the



Courtesy of the *Brown Alumni Monthly*

John Carter Brown Library, 1904, Brown University

Charles E. Paine house (1858) at 77 Franklin Street where a ballroom was added about 1886. These downtown assembly places, patronized principally by East Side residents, declined in popularity after the Rhode Island Women's Club erected Churchill House (Thornton and Thornton, architects) at 155 Angell Street in 1907, where a ballroom drew a large amount of society patronage.

The grounds of the Providence Base Ball Club, first located on Messer Street, were shifted in the nineties to Adelaide Park, an area west of Broad Street constituting a part of the former Park Garden (page 161). A new ball field, with a grandstand and bleachers,

15. See page 99. The Mathewson Street building was still standing in 1955, converted to business uses. The other buildings in the group have been razed.

16. The Spinks had been dancing teachers since 1870; Mr. Spink died before 1900 and Mrs. Spink continued the school for another decade. The Weybosset Street dwelling was built by Stephen Waterman c. 1818; a fragment of the house was still standing in 1955.

17. Now a part of Gladding Dry Goods Company.

1900 - 1910

was established about 1906 at Melrose Park, a 6½ acre tract west of Melrose Avenue, near Roger Williams Park, and was used a number of seasons by the Providence club of the International League. The professional ball field was shifted in the twenties to Kinsley Park at Kinsley Avenue and Acorn streets, and has since been abandoned.

The inauguration of Dr. William H. P. Faunce as president of Brown in 1899 was followed by an extensive building program at the university. The Van Wickle gates (Hoppin and Ely, Hoppin and Koen, associated architects) was built at the College Street entrance (illustration below) and the Administration Building (Hoppin and Ely, architects) was erected on the site of the University Grammar School,¹⁸ in 1901-02, with funds received from a bequest of Augustus Stout Van Wickle of the class of 1876. The old wooden fence



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Van Wickle gates (1901) and John Hay Library (1910), Brown University

around the campus subsequently was replaced by an iron fence with brick piers; most of its sections were paid for by classes, or by individuals in memory of classes, with class numerals inscribed thereon. Memorial gates were erected at the minor entrances, including the Class of 1872 gate (1903) on Prospect Street, the Class of 1887 and the Robinson gates (1903) on Waterman Street, and the John Nicholas Brown (1904) and William Goddard (1910) gates on George Street. The Engineering Building (Clarke and Howe, architects) and Caswell Hall (Hoppin and Ely, architects) were built on the former Lincoln Field in 1903-04 and Rockefeller Hall (McKim, Mead and White of New York, architects), donated by John D. Rockefeller, was constructed on the Middle Campus in 1904. These are all brick buildings, the last two mentioned reviving Early Republican

18. See page 79. The Administration Building is now a departmental building, its name changed to Van Wickle Hall.

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traditions. John Carter Brown Library (illustration, page 204), erected on the Middle Campus in 1904, is Greek revival with limestone walls and a red tile roof; and John Hay Library (illustration, page 205), constructed on Prospect Street in 1910, is a marble structure in the English Renaissance style (both designed by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge of Boston). The first was built by the trustees under the will of John Nicholas Brown and was presented to the university, together with a collection of books and manuscripts started by his father, John Carter Brown. The second, named for John Hay of the class of 1858, whose bust, by Saint-Gaudens, was set up in the vestibule, was erected with funds donated



R.I.H.S.

Pendleton House, 1904, Rhode Island School of Design, Benefit Street

by Andrew Carnegie and others to house the university library. A bust of Dante, on a pedestal, was erected on the terrace in 1921, the gift of Italians of Providence. The campus was adorned by three monumental works, namely, the Carrie Tower (Guy Lowell of Boston, architect, 1904), given by Paul Bajnotti in memory of his wife, Carrie Mathilde Brown Bajnotti, and replicas of the Roman statues of Caesar Augustus and Marcus Aurelius, presented in 1906 and 1908, respectively, by Moses B. I. Goddard. Two buildings were erected for the women's college on Cushing Street, namely, Sayles Gymnasium (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects, 1907), given by Frank A. Sayles, and Miller

1900 - 1910

Hall (Andrews, Jacques and Rantoul, architects, 1910), a dormitory erected under the bequest of Dr. and Mrs. Horace J. Miller.

Rhode Island School of Design acquired, by gift of Stephen O., Jesse H. and Manton B. Metcalf in 1903, the vacated Central Congregational Church (page 128) on Benefit Street, which was remodeled and named Memorial Hall. Pendleton House (page 64, illustration, page 206) was built north of Memorial Hall in 1904, designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson in the Early Republican style of domestic architecture.



R.I.H.S.

Providence Journal Building, 1906, Westminister and Eddy streets.

Annmary Brown Memorial (Norman M. Isham, architect), a small granite building, was erected at 21 Brown Street in 1907 by General Rush C. Hawkins as a memorial to his wife, Annmary Brown Hawkins. Both are entombed in a mausoleum adjoining the Memorial. The building, later acquired by Brown University, contains a library of incunabula and two galleries of paintings by early and late masters.

A State Armory, financed by an armory loan approved by the people November 7, 1905, was constructed in 1907-08 on Cranston Street, south of Dexter Training Ground.



R.I.H.S.

View southeast from City Hall c. 1920. Turks Head Building (1913), upper left; Butler Exchange (1873-1925), left center; Union Trust Building (1901), right; roof of Howard Building (1859-1956) in foreground.

1900 - 1910

William R. Walker and Son were architects of the building which includes a large drill hall flanked at each end by a four-story structure with a castellated tower.

The Union Trust Building (illustration, page 208), designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson, was erected at the corner of Westminster and Dorrance streets in 1901 and enlarged



R.I.H.S.

First Church of Christ Scientist, 1908, Prospect and Meeting streets.

20 years later. It is a brick and stone structure, 12 stories high, ornate in design, containing banking rooms on the street floor and offices in the upper stories. The Providence Journal Company put up a building at 207 Westminster Street (illustration, page 207) in 1904-06, in replacement of the building which it had occupied since 1899. It was a three-story

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structure, designed in the French Renaissance style by Peabody and Stearns of Boston, with Corinthian columns and a mansard roof. Successive alterations since its vacating by the *Journal* in 1934 (page 265) have completely transformed the building except the roof.

Several churches were erected in Providence during the first decade of the century. The most conspicuous, by reason of its high elevation on Prospect Street (illustration, page 209) is the First Church of Christ Scientist (Hoppin and Field, architects, 1908), designed in



R.I.H.S.

Saint Ann's Church, 1910, Hawkins Street.

the style of the Italian Renaissance with walls of yellow brick, trimmed with limestone and terra cotta. Surmounting the roof is a round colonnade, crowned by a copper dome and lantern, which dominates the East Side sky line. Polychrome terra cotta was used with brick in the construction of two Catholic churches, namely, Holy Ghost on Knight Street (1901-08) and Saint Ann's (illustration above) on Branch Avenue (1909-10). Both were designed by Murphy, Hindle and Wright and are featured by tall campaniles.¹⁹ Calvary

19. Saint Ann's established a parochial school at 42 Monticello Street and erected, in 1916, an industrial school at 253 Branch Avenue. Holy Ghost opened a school in the former Saint Adelbert's Church at 55 Ridge Street in 1923.

1900 - 1910

Baptist Church, a large yellow brick building of irregular shape with a corner tower, lancet windows and an octagonal dome over the auditorium, was erected at the corner of Broad and Stanwood streets in 1915 (Arthur Eaton Hill, architect.) Across Broad Street, at the corner of Glenham, Temple Beth El, a classic structure with Corinthian portico (E. T. Banning, architect) was built in 1911 by the Congregation Sons of Israel and David who vacated their former synagogue erected on Friendship Street in 1890. The Broad Street building became the temple of Congregation Shaare Zedek following the opening of a modern synagogue by the Sons of Israel and David on Orchard Avenue in 1954 (page 249).

Among the Roman Catholic institutions built during this period were Saint Vincent de Paul Infant Asylum (Murphy and Hindle, architects, 1900), a brick Colonial-type building on Regent Avenue, east of Davis Park, and a new Saint Mary's Parochial School (Murphy,



R.I.H.S.

I. Gifford Ladd house, c. 1900 (Bryant College), 1 Young Orchard Avenue.

Hindle and Wright, architects, 1904) on Bainbridge Avenue, adjoining Saint Mary's Church (page 189).

Providence Young Women's Christian Association (organized 1867) erected a six-story building (Hoppin and Ely, architects) at the corner of Washington and Jackson streets in 1905, providing club rooms and bedrooms for working girls.

In the early years of the century four large East Side estates were developed, respectively, by Henry Pearce at 182 George Street, I. Gifford Ladd at 1 Young Orchard Avenue, James Coats at 13 Brown Street, and Patrick Banigan at 510 Angell Street, each having a three-story dwelling, a stable and driveways. The Pearce house (Angell and Swift, architects) was built of granite in the Romanesque style. The Coats house (Ogden Codman of New York, architect) and the Banigan house (Martin and Hall, architects) were brick and their designs were influenced, respectively, by English Colonial and Tudor styles. The Ladd house

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

(Carrère and Hastings, architects, illustration, page 211), also brick-walled, was a complete reconstruction of the Sprague-Hidden house (c. 1845) into a mansion of the French chateau type.²⁰ An equally imposing house, on a smaller lot but without a stable, was erected by Francis W. Carpenter (Carrère and Hastings, architects) in the modern French manner at 276 Angell Street.

Except for these large estates the trend was toward smaller and more compact houses with an emphasis on utility, comfort and warmth. Bath rooms were more numerous and were featured by open plumbing and tiled walls. As new methods of steam, hot water and vapor heating were evolved fewer fireplaces were installed. Electricity superseded gas for illumination and the heavy Victorian chandeliers passed into history. Gas ranges were installed in kitchens. Other innovations included hardwood floors, enclosed porches and private garages.

The more typical of these houses reflect the symmetry and proportions of the Colonial revival. The design trend is exemplified by adjacent houses on Meeting Street, one of wood with a high gambrel roof at No. 144 (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects) and the other of brick with a hipped roof at No. 150 (Clarke and Howe, architects). Other examples are the steep gable-roof house at 194 Arlington Avenue (Hilton and Jackson, architects), the brick house with parapeted gables at 37 Cooke Street (Stone, Carpenter and Sheldon, architects), the hipped-roof stucco house at 170 Blackstone Boulevard (Clarke and Howe, architects) and the brick hipped-roof house at 140 Morris Avenue (Norman M. Isham, architect), the latter reminiscent of the works of John Holden Greene (page 75).

20. The Pearce estate was occupied by St. Joseph's Convent 1922-1954, then was acquired by Brown University. The Ladd estate served for several years as Hope Hospital, later becoming Bryant College (page 276). The Coats house was the governor's mansion during R. Livingston Beeckman's administration (1915-21) and was purchased by Brown in 1922 for a faculty club and converted in 1938 to Andrews House, the college infirmary. The Banigan house was razed about 1920 and replaced by Wayland Manor (page 252).



R.I.H.S.

Bajnotti Fountain, 1902, City Hall Park

CHAPTER 17 1910 - 1920

PROVIDENCE had grown up into the 20th century without a plan to guide its over-all development. Such problems as highway and bridge construction, railroads, water supply and sewage disposal, constituting fragments of a city plan, were faced as the need arose and each individual project was carried out, usually after long delay, with little regard either for its coordination with other civic projects or for a future expansion to meet the needs of a growing community.

Soon after the opening of the 20th century there arose a nation-wide movement for comprehensive city planning with an emphasis on economy, utility and public welfare. The pioneering organization to espouse the cause of planning in Rhode Island was the Public Park Association (page 163). Through its activities the Metropolitan Park Commission was created in 1904 (page 223) and the League of Improvement Societies was organized in 1905, the latter, headed by Luther D. Burlingame, comprising about 30 affiliated organizations throughout the state.

One of the earlier planning problems in Providence involved a better means of approach from the downtown area to the East Side, in which consideration was given both to an easy grade highway for street cars and vehicular traffic, and to a tunnel limited in use to the traction lines. An East Side thoroughfare committee, created by the City Council in 1904¹, recommended the construction of a tunnel, as designed by C. R. Makepeace. An East Side approach commission, created in 1910² during the administration of Mayor Henry Fletcher (1909-13), proposed an easy grade highway, designed by John R. Freeman, starting at Post Office (Memorial) Square, overpassing Canal and North Main streets, crossing Benefit Street at grade, and underpassing Prospect Street³ (illustration, page 214).

A joint special committee on railroad franchises, appointed to investigate the street railway system and make recommendations for its improvement and development, engaged the services of Bion J. Arnold, a consulting engineer of Chicago.⁴ His report, made to the City Council June 1, 1911,⁵ disclosed that "the community has outgrown its present streets, and should create new or enlarged ones for double-track operation. The downtown roadways especially are very cramped, and the citizens do not seem to properly appreciate the necessity of wider ones. Routing the majority of cars over a few main streets appears to have been unduly influenced by the presence of private or business interests. The convergence of radial arteries has only accentuated this difficulty. Street obstruction has discouraged fast scheduled speed . . . Thorough re-routing in the terminal district is necessary to relieve congested streets." The report made specific recommendations with respect to traction improvement; for the speeding of traffic it proposed various service improvements as well

1. C.C. Resolution, June 7, 1904. The committee included Abraham A. Gray, G. Richmond Parsons, C. R. Makepeace, Joseph Balch, Henry A. Grimwood, John E. Kendrick and George P. Peterson.

2. C.C. Resolution, February 8, 1910. The commission was composed of Mayor Fletcher, Benjamin P. Moulton, Walter F. Slade, John R. Freeman and Judge John H. Stiness.

3. *Report of Commission on East Side Approach* (Providence, 1912), pp. 8-13.

4. Resolution of Joint Special Committee on Railroad Franchises, January 11, 1911.

5. Bion J. Arnold, *Report on the Traction Improvement and Development within the Providence District* (Providence, 1911, pp. 10-11).

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as the widening and double-tracking of certain highways, the establishment of a loop around Exchange Place, and the construction of an East Side tunnel for street cars.

The tunnel plan was revived as the "citizen's plan" at a public hearing April 21, 1911. It was approved by the City Council and referred for further study, as an alternate to the easy grade highway, to the East Side approach commission, under whose direction plans were prepared by City Engineer Otis F. Clapp, and subsequently approved by the City Council.



From Reports of the Commission on East Side Approach, 1912

Easy grade approach to East Side, proposed by John R. Freeman, 1911.

On May 27, 1912, the city granted the Rhode Island Company an exclusive franchise to operate street railways in Providence for a 20-year period. Under terms of the franchise the company agreed to construct the tunnel, remove the rails from College and Prospect streets and sections of Angell and Waterman Street, lay new rails on certain highways, including a loop on Exchange Place, pay a portion of the cost of highway improvements, and effect certain surface refinements. And the city agreed to carry out a specified program of highway widenings and extensions. The tunnel was started in 1912 and was completed in 1914. It was 24 feet wide, 1800 feet long, overpassing the railroad tunnel (page 201) beneath Brown Street. The North Main Street portal (illustration, page 215) was located a

1910-1920

short distance west of the School of Design on land formerly occupied by the two-story Jefferds Building; and the Thayer Street portal was within Fones Alley, 200 feet west of Thayer Street. The College Hill lines were routed through the tunnel upon its completion.

Waterman Street was extended from North Main to Canal, a project involving the demolition of Arnold Block (page 124) and a warehouse behind it. When the buildings were razed their joint area, together with two flanking gangways, provided a highway 95 to 110 feet in width. Car tracks from Post Office Square were laid on the sides of the highway leading, respectively, to the tunnel on the south and Pawtucket on the north;⁶ the remainder of the roadway provided a much-needed vehicular route from the East Side downtown, thereby relieving traffic jams on College Street and Market Square.



R.I.H.S.

East Side tunnel portal, 1914, North Main Street, and Rhode Island School of Design.

Empire Street, formerly known as Walker Street, a narrow highway running from Westminster to Fountain, where Broadway and Aborn Street converged, was widened to 80 feet and was extended southeasterly, 70 feet in width, to Weybosset, opposite Chestnut Street.⁷ Fountain Street was widened to 80 feet from Empire to Dorrance. The opening of LaSalle Square, extending from Fountain northwesterly to Sabin, provided circulation

6. The south tracks later were abandoned and the tunnel cars routed from Market Square over North Main Street. All tracks have since been removed.

7. Among the buildings condemned for the Empire Street extension were Central Baptist Church (page 127) and Empire Theatre (page 203).



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View of Exchange Place c. 1915, showing the mall (1914) and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument as relocated 1906.
Central Fire Station (1903-1938) left; Federal Building (1908) center. Butler Exchange (1873-1928) right.

for traffic between those highways and the west section of the city. In the other projects 64-foot widths were provided; these included the extension of Franklin Street from Westminster to Broad and the widening of Randall Street, Maryland Avenue (Narragansett Boulevard), and portions of North Main Street (Constitution Hill), Smith Street (Francis to Chalkstone Avenue), and Chalkstone Avenue.

Exchange Place Mall (illustration, page 216) was constructed in 1914 under direction of the Board of Park Commissioners and was planted with trees, shrubs and flowers. The street railway tracks were laid in a loop around the mall and a trolley shelter (Martin and Hall, architects), containing a public comfort station, was constructed at its westerly end opposite City Hall.

At this time the city had about 250 miles of received streets, of which one-quarter were paved with granite blocks, asphalt or other types of durable material, and the remainder macadamized. In earlier years some of the streets were sprinkled by watering carts and by watering cars operated by the Rhode Island Company on its lines. A more permanent method of dust control was instituted in 1908 by the application of crude oil on the surfaces of macadamized streets. Oil-bound macadam was used thereafter to a considerable extent in highway construction.

A traffic ordinance was passed in 1911 regulating the use of highways by vehicles and limiting certain streets to one-way traffic. The police established a traffic squad of 19 men to direct traffic, guard pedestrians at important junction points, and enforce the new rules and regulations. The mounted squad, which had been active at parades and other ceremonies since its origin in 1879 (page 166), was discontinued at this time and was replaced by a motorcycle squad. A new police station was built on Sessions Street in 1916 (Knight C. Richmond, architect) and continued to serve the East Side until its abandonment in 1947.

The last gas lights (page 201) were removed from the streets of Providence, in 1913, when the Narragansett Electric Lighting Company was granted a five-year exclusive franchise by the city to provide highway illumination. Under terms of the contract magnetite arc lamps with opalescent globes were installed on the principal highways and tungsten lamps on the other streets. The new system, including a total of over 9000 units, was completed in August, 1914.

Motorization of the fire department was commenced in 1911 and the last piece of horse-drawn apparatus was withdrawn December 9, 1920. During that period the engines were replaced by pumers. The system of bell-ringing (page 166) in the towers of fire stations was terminated for fires in January, 1909 but was continued for "time" and "no school" signals until 1917 when all outside bells were removed. A new fire station was erected on Franklin Street in 1915 (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects).

During the years following its grant of an exclusive franchise the Rhode Island Company encountered a loss of patronage on its lines as a result of the increasing use of private automobiles. That trend was aggravated in 1914 by an invasion of hundreds of "jitneys" on the highways of Providence, providing transportation to all parts of the city at a nickel a head, a movement finally curbed by an ordinance enacted in August, 1915, requiring each operator of a jitney to file bonds to the amount of \$500 for each seat in his car. On January 20, 1919, the Rhode Island Company went into receivership and, after a reorganization effective July 8, 1921, its system was operated by the United Electric Railways Company.

The complexity of the problems disclosed by the Arnold and Freeman reports (page 213) demonstrated the need of coordinating all public improvements into a master plan. This program was advocated by a number of civic organizations and was championed



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City Hall, 1878, showing upper story as remodeled 1914.

by Mayor Joseph H. Gainer (1913-27), resulting in the creation by the City Council of a city plan commission December 2, 1913,⁸ 41 years after such action had been recommended by City Engineer Charles E. Paine (page 143). The commission enumerated various problems including highway changes, river and harbor improvements, bridges, tunnels, parks, playgrounds, subdivision platting, civic center developments and public building sites, as well as proposals for new legislation.⁹ Among specific proposals was a plan for improving the approaches to the State House from the Union Station by changing the lines of certain highways, eliminating a portion of the freight yards, creating a monument-plaza, and providing a landscape treatment for the Public Garden.¹⁰ A joint commission was appointed by the General Assembly in 1915 for executing the project, but the plan ultimately was nullified both by the assembly and the council; its defeat proved to be a prelude to an attitude of apathy displayed by legislative bodies with respect to city planning in spite of public interest in the subject. The City Council gave little heed to the commission's subsequent plan for the development of 250 acres of vacant land in the northwest section of the city for a high-grade residential development.¹¹ A proposal by the commission for the enactment of excess condemnation legislation, however, was approved by the council and was adopted as an amendment to Article 17 of the State Constitution by vote of the people November 7, 1916.¹²

The shipping interests of Providence were stimulated by cooperative action on the part of the city, the state, and the Federal Government, which agreed upon definite harbor improvements in 1910. The ship channel was enlarged to a width of 600 feet and a depth of 30 feet from Fox Point southerly to Narragansett bay, a project involving the elimination of a sharp point of land which jutted into the river at Field's Point. The city extended its Field's Point properties in 1911 by purchase of about 23 acres, northward along the harbor line,¹³ and erected a quay wall, 3000 feet long, for a municipal wharf. The state acquired 17 acres of land east of Allen's Avenue, some distance north of the quay wall, and built a state pier, 120 feet wide, extending 600 feet to the harbor line. Allen's Avenue¹⁴ was re-paved and improved from Eddy Street to New York Avenue and spur tracks were laid, connecting

8. C.O., 1913, chapter 599. The membership of the commission included the mayor, the presidents of the Board of Aldermen and Common Council, the commissioner of public works and four citizens appointed by the mayor. The citizens first appointed were Eleazer B. Homer, chairman, Henry A. Barker, secretary, Theodore Francis Green and Thomas F. Farrell.

9. City Plan Commission, *First Annual Report for the Year 1914*, p. 14.

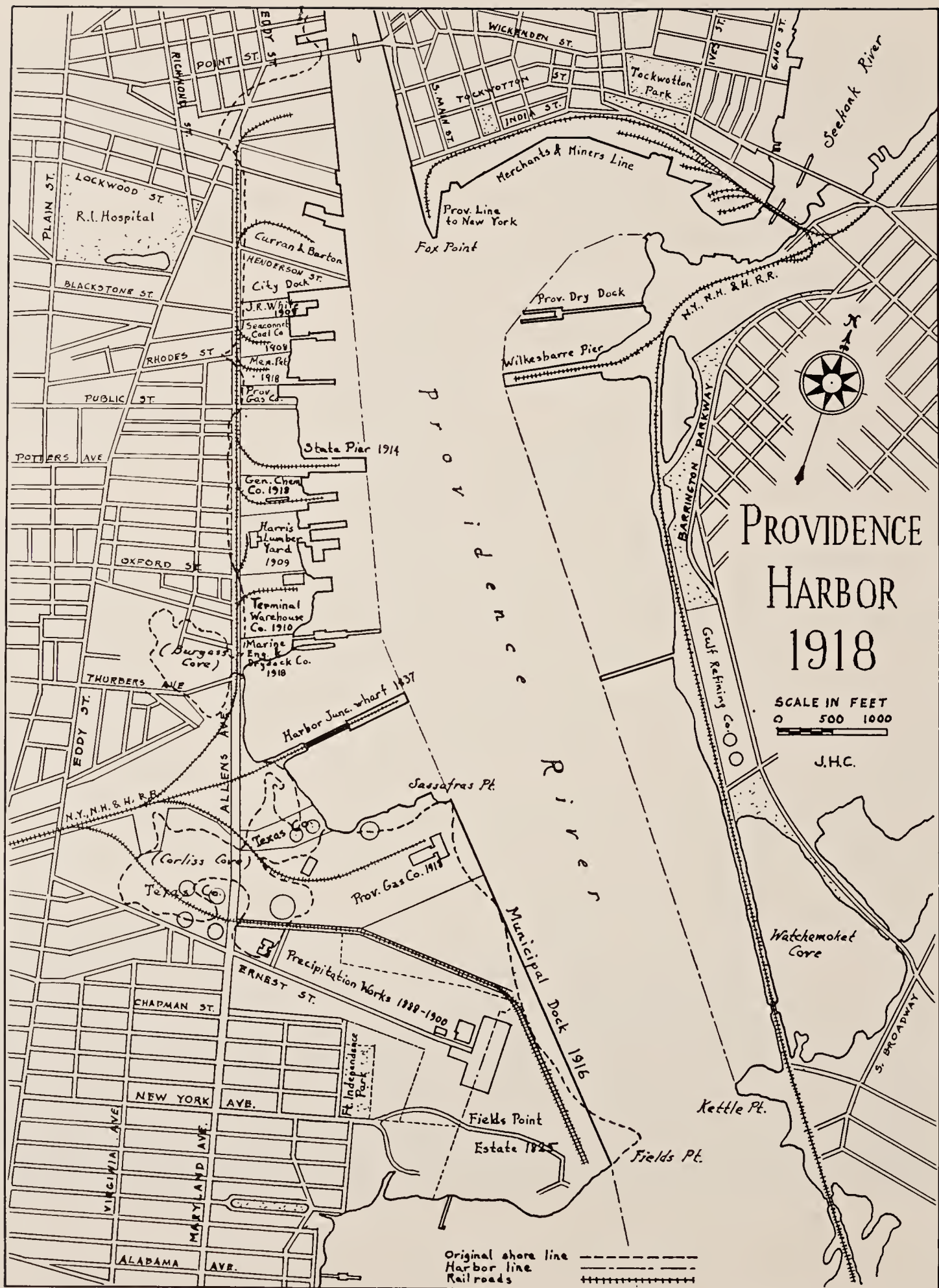
10. *Ibid*, p. 26.

11. City Plan Commission, *Fourth Annual Report for the Year 1917*, p. 34. Nearly all of the land subsequently was developed for three large estates, namely, Triggs Memorial Park, Mount Pleasant High School, and LaSalle Academy. See pages 241, 264, and 245.

12. Under the original state constitution the state and its cities and towns were authorized to condemn for public use only such private property as was actually needed for specific projects. By that limitation of authority no public control of property bordering the improvements could be exercised. Detrimental results had been observed in Providence in the widening of Dorrance Street in 1855 (page 166) and Empire Street in 1914 (page 215) which left, in each case, a width of only a few feet to the next street, on which a narrow building was erected. Under the amended legislation the city was given authority, in its highway and park projects, to condemn sufficient excess land to control the development of each project.

13. Properties already owned included the 34-acre Field's Point estate (page 147) and the 46-acre sewage disposal works (page 201). The new north boundary adjoined the Providence Gas Company's land at Sassafras Point, acquired in 1900. See map, page 220.

14. Allen's Avenue, a straight thoroughfare, 80 feet wide, extending two miles from Eddy Street to New York Avenue, was platted about 1880, to follow the approximate shore line, crossing Hawkins, Burgess and Corliss coves (see map, page 220). The water areas were filled and the highway laid out about 1895.



the Harbor Junction branch railroad with the state and municipal piers. The State Pier, including a steel shed, was financed by a bond issue and was dedicated May 21, 1914.¹⁵ The first steamer to use the pier was the *Venezia* on December 17, 1913, commencing Fabre Line service to Mediterranean ports.¹⁶ The Municipal Wharf was ready for commercial use in 1916 and was leased to lumber, coal, oil, and other concerns.

In 1915 the metropolitan terminal development commission was organized under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce¹⁷ with the cooperation of the United States Engineer's office, the state harbor commission, the state harbor improvement commission and the Seekonk River commission, with the objective of coordinating their respective activities for the improvement of the port of Providence. Their projects were crystallized in a plan for the development of Providence harbor made by O. Perry Sarle in 1915. The westerly side of the harbor was to have a row of docks and slips, built to the harbor line as in the harbor commissioners' plan of 1891 (page 181) and the easterly side was to be similarly developed as far south as Kettle Point. The plan included also the widening of the mouth of Seekonk river and the construction of a railroad tunnel under the river from the Harbor Junction branch to the East Providence shore. The proposal failed to meet the approval of the various transportation companies and was discarded. The Chamber of Commerce, characterizing Providence as "The Southern Gateway of New England," sought to extend the revival of foreign commerce, instituted by service on the Fabre line. Failing in this, it succeeded in inducing several large oil companies to establish plants on the harbor front in Providence and East Providence. To the waters of the harbor and Narragansett bay, already polluted with sewage and mill waste, oil leakage now became an added factor to the discouragement of the fishing industry and yachtsmen.

The Southern New England Railway, a branch of the Grand Trunk system, received charters in Massachusetts and Rhode Island to extend the Central Vermont Railroad to the Union Station in Providence with a branch to tidewater at the municipal dock. The line was planned to approach Rhode Island by way of Webster, Massachusetts, pass through the northwesterly part of the state, and enter the city from North Providence 600 feet west of Charles Street. From that point the terminal line was to extend in a southerly direction, with grade separations at highways, to the New York, New Haven and Hartford roadbed near Acorn Street, and the branch line was projected through the west part of the city and a portion of Cranston with a swing easterly to join the Harbor Junction branch north of Roger Williams Park and across Allen's Avenue to the harbor. By the year 1914 property rights had been acquired over most of the route and shortly afterwards grading operations were commenced and some of the abutments were constructed. Various obstacles hindered the progress of the work, scheduled for completion in 1917, and the project ultimately was abandoned.

Frederick C. Green was appointed superintendent of parks July 1, 1909, with oversight of 31 park estates aggregating 640 acres in area, two-thirds of which were included in Roger Williams Park (pages 147, 184). Tockwotton Park (page 165), Hayward Park (page 165), City Hall Park (page 200), Blackstone Boulevard Parkway (page 203), Dexter Training Ground (page 147) and nine small neighborhood parks were landscaped and developed. Blackstone Park (pages 147, 203), Davis Park (page 185) and Neutaconkanut Hill Park (page 203) were

15. The pier and shed were destroyed by fire February 25, 1931, and rebuilt.

16. The Fabre liner *Providence*, launched at Toulon, France, August 3, 1914, made her first appearance at the state pier June 17, 1920. The line was later removed from Providence.

17. A reorganization of the Board of Trade (page 150) in 1913.

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partially improved, and the other park estates were awaiting development. During Mr. Green's twelve years as superintendent¹⁸ five parks and twelve playgrounds were added to the park system and two estates already owned were enlarged, increasing public recreational lands by a total of 81 acres. Tockwotton Park was extended easterly to Ives Street in 1911; a field house was erected on the estate in 1914 and a ball field and children's playground were laid out. Neutaconkanut Hill Park was enlarged between 1910 and 1918 by purchase of five tracts of land aggregating 37 acres, a part of which were located in the town of Johnston; two ball fields were laid out at the foot of the hill, near Plainfield Street, and a driveway was constructed from Sunset Avenue to the summit. A tract of about seven acres in Johnston, adjacent to the southern portion of the park, was bequeathed to the city by Abby A. King who died in 1915, and was named King Park.¹⁹ In 1919 the city re-annexed about 45 acres from Johnston, including the park properties.²⁰ This increased the area of Providence to the present total of 18.91 square miles.

Rochambeau Park, a small lot on Summit Street, was given to the city by J. L. Kehoe, in 1911, on which a boulder monument was erected by the Rhode Island Society, Sons of the American Revolution (page 54). Fort Independence Park was established in 1915 upon transfer to the park department of 4½ acres of city-owned land on Robin Hill, near Field's Point (page 147); this spot, affording a fine view of the harbor and Narragansett bay, was the site of a Revolutionary fort.²¹ Gladys Potter Garden, a 1¾ acre tract on Humboldt Avenue, came to the city in 1917 as a gift from Josephine E. Potter in memory of her daughter. Among Mr. Green's early activities at Roger Williams Park were the layout of a speedway, a ball field, a children's playground and tennis courts, and the erection of a field house. In 1915 an addition was made to the Natural History Museum (page 184) in which was installed the Manly Hardy collection of North American birds, presented to the city by the Rhode Island Audubon Society in memory of Mrs. Henry T. Grant. In the same year a band stand (Cady, architect) was erected on Crystal Lake with an open terrace serving as an auditorium. New driveways were laid out, winding through wooded scenery and landscaped areas, and flower gardens of great beauty were developed.

The playground movement in Providence had its origin late in the 19th century in the maintenance of supervised summer playgrounds in certain of the school yards. Several sites were made available for playfields in 1906 but were unimproved for lack of funds. In 1908 the Providence Playground Association was organized and was active both in the conduct of playgrounds in congested districts and in arousing public sentiment in favor of municipal acquisition, development and maintenance of a comprehensive system of recreational areas. A board of recreation was created by the City Council in 1912 with authority to administer the playgrounds and other social centers included in the park and school systems. Joseph J. McCaffrey was appointed superintendent of playgrounds in 1913 and continued in that position 27 years. By the year 1921 all but ten of the playground estates included in the park lands had been graded and developed, many were furnished with playground equip-

18. Mr. Green died in office April 21, 1921.

19. This was a part of an original 200-acre estate acquired by Clement King after he had settled in Providence in 1687. It extended from Ochee Spring on Hartford Avenue to Pocasset river, including Neutaconkanut Hill. A portion of the land bequeathed by Miss King, on which were located a house built by her father, William Borden King, in 1815 and a little gambrel-roof house of early 18th century origin, were subject to the life interest of Louise E. Blankenburg. Following her death in 1953 the city came in full possession of the estate and subsequently caused the demolition of both houses.

20. A.&R., January session, 1918.

21. See page 52. The park was abandoned and the hill leveled in 1942.

ment, some had field houses, ball fields, tennis courts and wading pools. A bath house was built at Franklin Square (page 147).

In addition to the city park system several reservations were maintained in Providence by the Metropolitan Park Commission. That state agency, appointed by act of the General Assembly November 15, 1904, acquired 1,216 acres of reservations in Providence, East Providence, Barrington, North Providence, Pawtucket, Cranston, Johnston, Warwick and Lincoln between 1909 and 1917.²² The Providence reservations included Merino Flats in Olneyville, Metcalf Field on the shore of Leonard's pond (given by Jesse H. Metcalf, 1913), Canada Pond Parkway (given by Mr. Metcalf, Sarah Greene and Clarence Greene, 1914-15), Mashapaug Pond (1915), Corliss Park (1916), and West River Reservation (1916).

A growing consciousness that sub-standard housing conditions were prevalent in certain sections of the city led to the organization of the General Committee on Improved Housing in 1915. Under its sponsorship a survey was conducted by John Ihlder of New Rochelle, New York,²³ which disclosed elements of land overcrowding, fire hazards, inadequate sanitation and low standards of living. Pursuant to recommendations included in the report an act in relation to the housing of people in cities was introduced in the General Assembly the following year, but failed of passage.

Public school enrollment increased, during the first 20 years of the century, from 23,000 to 35,000. The school committee consisted of three men elected from each of the ten wards by general vote. Walter H. Small succeeded Horace S. Tarbell as superintendent in 1902 and was followed, successively, by Randall J. Condon in 1910 and Isaac O. Winslow in 1913. During that period several of the older schoolhouses were enlarged, ten of the more obsolete were vacated, and 17 new buildings were erected.²⁴ Typical of the latter was Veazie Street School (Clarke, Howe and Homer, architects, 1909), a two-story brick building with flat roof and parapet, a Classic center entrance, a first-story assembly hall and six class rooms.

By the year 1915 schoolhouse plans had become somewhat standardized, varying principally in exterior design. Each standard building was of brick construction with three stories and a basement and contained an assembly hall and about 16 class rooms, and was provided with wide corridors for circulation and means of egress. Grammar schools conforming to that type included Laurel Hill School (Clarke and Howe, architects, 1915), Beaufort Street School (Murphy, Hindle and Wright, architects, 1916, now George J. West Junior High School, illustration, page 224), Charles Street School (William R. Walker and Son, architects, 1917, now Esek Hopkins Junior High School), and Cole Avenue School (Stone, Carpenter and Sheldon, architects, 1917, now John Howland Primary School). The Courtland Street School (Hoppin and Field, architects, 1915, now Samuel W. Bridgham Junior High School) was larger, having 30 class rooms; a six-room addition was built in 1928.

In 1920 there were in operation four high, 19 grammar, 71 primary, and three fresh-air schools. The primary schoolhouses also provided quarters for 40 kindergartens and 14 schools for backward children.

22. The membership of the commission included Dr. Fenner H. Peckham (chairman of the Providence park commissioners), chairman, Alfred Stone, vice chairman, Henry A. Barker, secretary, Edward F. Ely, assistant secretary, Augustine Jones, Amasa M. Eaton, John R. Freeman, and various *ex-officio* members. A metropolitan park plan, made by Mr. Barker for the Public Park Association in 1903, provided a basis for the system later put into effect. The Metropolitan Park Commission was abolished in 1935 and its properties placed under jurisdiction of the State Division of Forests, Parks and Parkways. The park estates are shown on a map accompanying the *Sixth Annual Report of the Metropolitan Park Commission, 1910*.

23. John Ihlder, *The Houses of Providence, a Study of Present Conditions and Trends*, Providence, 1916.

24. All except five of these schools were still in operation in 1955.

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New buildings were erected for two private schools for girls, namely, Mary C. Wheeler School at 216 Hope Street (Franklin J. Sawtelle, architect, 1911) and Lincoln School at 301 Butler Avenue (Eleazer B. Homer, architect, 1913), the former designed in the Elizabethan style with brick walls and the latter stucco-coated, with Colonial details. Wheeler School was established at 26 Cabot Street in 1889 and Lincoln School was opened in 1884 at the corner of Brook and Waterman streets and subsequently was housed at 59 Angell Street and 223 Thayer Street. Dr. Helen W. Cooke opened Gordon School for children in 1910 at her residence, 405 Angell Street (Hilton and Jackson, architects, 1905), and erected an open-air school in the rear of the house in 1915.



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George J. West Junior High School, 1916, Beaufort Street.

The estate of the Rhode Island School of Design was enlarged by the acquisition of land on North Main Street upon which a Textile Building (Day and Klauder of Philadelphia, architects) was erected in 1915, the gift of the Metcalf family.²⁵ The school also acquired the Carr house (page 170) at 29 Waterman Street for a girls' dormitory and the Providence Gas Company building at the rear of 20 Market Square (page 124) for the mechanical arts department.

Providence College was founded in 1917 through the efforts of Bishop Harkins of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rhode Island, and was granted a charter in that year "for the

25. The building was later extended northward to the tunnel portal.

1910-1920

promotion of virtue and piety and learning in such of the languages and liberal arts and sciences as shall be recommended from time to time by the corporation." As a site for the college an 18-acre tract at the intersection of Eaton Street and River Avenue was purchased. The adjoining Bradley estate²⁶ was acquired in 1926 which, together with later purchases, increased the property to about 46 acres. The first academic building was Bishop Harkins Hall (illustration below), a four-story brick and limestone structure erected in the Gothic style in 1919, containing lecture rooms, laboratories, an auditorium and a library. Matthew Sullivan was architect and John W. Donahue of Springfield, Massachusetts, designed a subsequent addition. Hendricken Field for athletics was established on the grounds.



R.I.H.S.

Bishop Harkins Hall, 1919, Providence College.

Most of the ecclesiastical architecture of the period followed Gothic tradition. Among the buildings were three large Catholic churches designed by Murphy, Hindle and Wright. The Assumption (1910-12)²⁷ on Potter's Avenue, near Cranston Street, is English Gothic

26. See page 126. The adjacent Bailey estate was acquired by the House of the Good Shepherd, a Catholic institution for wayward girls. A three-story school (Murphy, Hindle and Wright, architects) was erected in 1917 and the homestead was converted into a convent. The land and buildings were transferred to Providence College June 23, 1955.

27. The first Church of the Assumption was built on Potter's Avenue in 1871; the new building adjoins it on the west.

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with two towers in the nave; Saint Michael's (1891-1915)²⁸ on Oxford Street (illustration below), a brick edifice, has a high nave with clerestory windows and a massive square tower; and Saint Patrick's (1903-16)²⁹ on Smith street (illustration, page 246), near the State House, is built of yellow brick and terra cotta with a square tower at the angle formed by the nave and transept. The Fourth Baptist Church at Hope Street and Rochambeau Avenue (Arthur Eaton Hill, architect, 1910), which succeeded the original edifice on Howell



R.I.H.S.

Saint Michael's Church, 1915, Oxford Street.

28. Saint Michael's was organized in 1856, as Saint Bernard's, in the former South Baptist Meeting House on Prairie Avenue (then in Cranston). A small brick church was built in 1861 and named Saint Michael's. The basement of the church on Oxford Street, designed by Martin and Hall, was built in 1891 and roofed to provide a temporary room for services. The superstructure, started in 1906, was designed by Murphy, Hindle and Wright.

29. The church was erected adjacent to the original Saint Patrick's (page 111) which later was razed. The basement was started in 1903, roofed temporarily, and occupied the next year; the superstructure was commenced in 1912.

Street (page 86), has a square corner tower with clock faces; an addition was built in 1929 (Clarke and Howe, architects), including a gabled facade on Hope Street with a large pointed window. Calvary Episcopal Church (now Saint Martin's),³⁰ on Orchard Avenue (Clarke and Howe, architects, 1916), is a stone English Gothic structure with a heavy tower projecting from the street facade and a large decorative window facing Orchard Court. Central Baptist Church (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects, 1916),³¹ at the corner of Lloyd and Elmgrove avenues, is perpendicular Gothic with stone walls and an entrance tower at the left of the nave. The Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal) at 655 Hope Street (Clarke and Howe, architects, 1915)³² and Saint Sebastian's (Roman Catholic) on Cole Avenue (A. J. Murphy, architect, 1916) reflect English parish church design. Saint Raymond's (Roman Catholic) at 1128 North Main Street (Maginnis and Walsh of Boston, architects, 1911) is a brick adaptation of Spanish Mission design and Saint Charles Borromeo on Dexter Street (Walter F. Fontaine, architect, 1915-18), which replaced a former church on Harrison Street, has elements of Romanesque.

Parochial schools were established by all of the new Catholic churches, and the former Saint Patrick's school was converted into a high school.

Six theatres were built in the downtown area during this period, including the Union (1913, the name changed to Fay's in 1916) at 60 Union Street, the Emery (1914) at 79 Mathewson Street, Shubert Majestic (1916) at the corner of Washington and Empire streets (illustration, page 228), the Modern (1917) at 446 Westminster Street (the latter three designed by William R. Walker and Son), the Strand (Thomas J. Hill Pierce, architect, 1916) at 85 Washington Street, and the Albee (A. E. Westover, architect, 1919) at 316 Westminster Street.³³ The Strand and Shubert Majestic, each seating over 2000 persons, were built exclusively for motion pictures and the others, with somewhat smaller capacities, were equipped also for stage shows. The Albee, erected on the site of the former Nickel Theatre (originally the Dime Museum, illustration page 231), adjoining Grace Church, succeeded the former Keith's Opera House for vaudeville and stock;³⁴ its five-story facade, crowned by a curved parapet, was designed in architectural terra cotta.

Two large office buildings were erected in the business area, namely, Turks Head Building (Howells and Stokes of New York, architects, 1913) at the junction of Westminster and Weybosset streets and Hospital Trust Building (York and Sawyer of New York, architects, 1919) at 15 Westminster Street. Turks Head Building (illustration, page 248) was built in replacement of Whitman Block, a landmark dating from 1825 (page 96). A portion of the original lot was taken by the city for widening the highway at the street intersection. The 16-story building, constructed of white brick with granite and limestone trimmings, is featured by a massive Turk's head in the center of the curved facade, reminiscent of the wooden effigy of an Ottoman warrior that formerly adorned the Whitman

30. The society, formed in 1899 as an outgrowth of the Church of the Saviour (page 111), first erected a small wood church near the present building.

31. The site of the church originally was in the center of Cat Swamp (page 4). The building was erected to succeed the former Central Baptist Church which was condemned when Empire Street was constructed (page 215).

32. The original Church of the Redeemer (c. 1860) still stands at the corner of North Main and Lippitt streets, now Saint Hedwig's Polish Catholic Church.

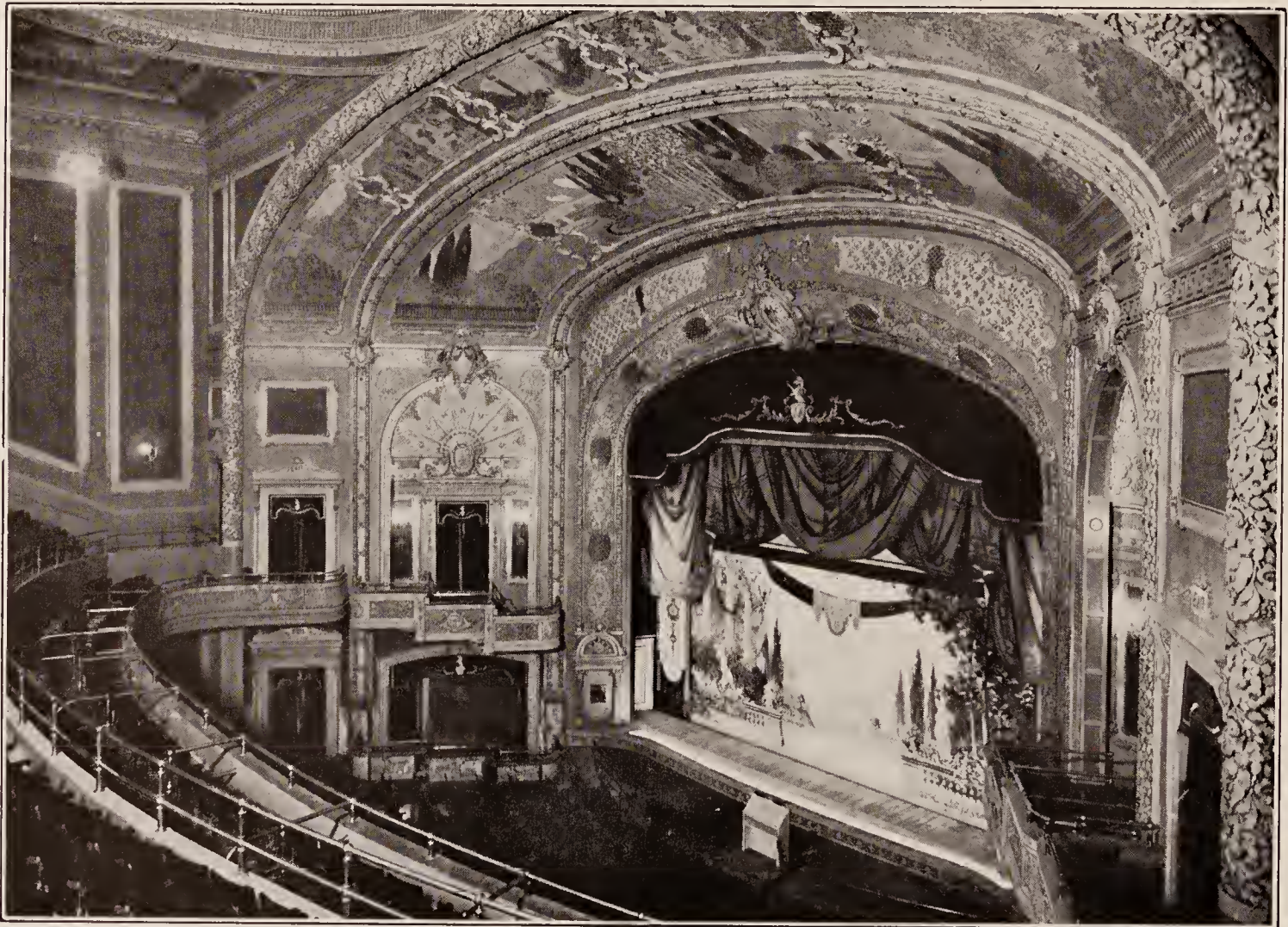
33. Fay's Theatre operated as a vaudeville house until its closing in 1950, and was razed the following year. The Emery (later known as the Carleton) was razed in 1953. The Modern, known successively as the Playhouse, Victory and Westminster, was idle in 1956. The Majestic, Strand and Albee were still operating in that year.

34. See page 203. The Albee Stock Company was discontinued in 1930 after playing 29 summer seasons.

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house (page 40). The Hospital Trust Building (illustrations, pages 236, 272) was erected on the site of the bank's former building (page 188), together with land on the east and north, which involved the removal of the Washington Buildings (page 110) on Washington Row and two buildings on Exchange Place. The 11-story building has walls of Indiana limestone and its ornamentation is confined to the treatment of the first story, with round-topped windows separated by Corinthian pilasters, and the roof cornice and balustrade. An addition was made on the west side of the building in 1928.

The Peoples Savings Bank (incorporated 1851) erected a small banking house in 1913 (Clarke and Howe, architects, illustration, page 254), replacing Roger Williams Bank Building (page 89) at 27 Market Square,³⁵ its Greek Ionic frontispiece of white marble



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Proscenium of Majestic Theatre, 1916, 201 Washington Street.

recalling details of the Erechtheum at Athens. Among other business buildings constructed during the period were the Steinert Building (G. Henri Desmond of Boston, architect, 1911) at 509 Westminister Street, featured by a six-story facade of architectural terra cotta; a warehouse on Pine Street with walls of buff brick and limestone (Monks and Johnson of Boston, architects, 1914), erected by the Manufacturers Outlet Company with an extension overpassing the highway to that company's department store; and the seven-

35. Vacated by the bank in 1948 and acquired by the School of Design.

story Telephone Building at 234 Washington Street (Clarke and Howe, architects, 1917),³⁶ designed in the classic manner with brick and limestone walls.

The city acquired over 25 acres of land on Eaton Street on which it erected, in 1910, the Providence City Hospital (Martin and Hall, architects) for the care of communicable diseases, financed by loans authorized between 1905 and 1908. The original group of buildings, Colonial in design, consisted of administrative, service, and ward units; a tuberculosis ward was added in 1912. The name was changed to Charles V. Chapin Hospital in honor of Dr. Chapin, superintendent of health, 1884-1932, upon his retirement.

Additions to the facilities of Butler Hospital (page 191) included new entrance gates in 1905, the gift of Colonel William Goddard in memory of John Carter Brown and John Nicholas Brown; a fourth-story addition to Center House (1906) and a power house (1910), both designed by Knight C. Richmond; and a Nurses' Home (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects), a building in the Tudor style, erected in 1912 with funds bequeathed by William H. Potter.

Saint Elizabeth Home, an institution founded by Grace Church in 1882 for the care of incurable women,³⁷ erected a three-story brick building (Clarke and Howe, architects), Elizabethan in style, at the corner of Melrose Street and Atlantic Avenue, in 1916. The home is now maintained by the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island.

Settlement houses were built in two congested areas, each with an assembly hall, a clinic department, and educational and other facilities for neighborhood centers (Cady, architect). One was Federal Hill House, erected in the Italian district at 400 Atwells Avenue, in 1916, which superseded Sprague House, established in 1887 at 417 Atwells Avenue.³⁸ The other was Nickerson House, erected by Providence Day Nursery Association, adjacent to Grace Memorial Home at 133 Delaine Street, in 1917, with funds donated by Miss Lyra Brown Nickerson and others.³⁹

Providence Young Men's Christian Association, having outgrown its building at 519 Westminster Street (page 167), erected a new home at the corner of Broad and Seekell streets (Shattuck and Hussey of Chicago, architects), in 1913, containing club rooms, dormitories, and a large gymnasium. The main building is nine stories high with two-story wings extending toward front and rear, and has walls of brick with limestone and terra cotta trimmings.⁴⁰ The Westminster Street building was razed and replaced by the Jackson Building.

Of the many attractive dwellings erected during this period only a few are singled out for comment. The Phillips house (1911) at 236 George Street and the Steedman house (1912) at 271 Angell Street (both designed by Clarke, Howe and Homer) are brick Colonial-type hipped-roof dwellings. Modern adaptations of Colonial motives are noted in the adjacent Farnsworth and Holbrook houses (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects, 1912) at 104 and 106 Prospect Street. Miss Ellen D. Sharpe's large brick residence at 87 Prospect Street (Parker, Thomas and Rice of Boston, architects, 1912, illustration

36. A large addition was made to the building in 1944 by the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company which absorbed the Providence Telephone Company in 1923. Another unit was added on Greene Street in 1955 (Howe, Prout & Ekman, architects).

37. The first home was located on Vinton Street.

38. Sprague House Association was reorganized as Federal Hill House Association in 1916.

39. Providence Day Nursery Association, established under auspices of Grace Church in 1884, erected Grace Memorial Home for little children in 1885.

40. Alterations were made to the main building in 1951 (Creer, Kent, Mather, Cruise & Aldrich, architects). An adjacent Boys' Building was erected 1954-56 (Creer, Kent, Cruise & Aldrich, architects).

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below) has Elizabethan details. Among the stucco dwellings are the Merriman house at 60 Manning Street (Parker, Thomas and Rice, architects, 1912) and the Brigham house at 460 Rochambeau Avenue (Eleazer B. Homer, architect, 1915), the latter reflecting Spanish influence. A brick gambrel-roof house of Colonial design was erected at 59 George Street in 1915 (Clarke and Howe, architects),⁴¹ replacing the Greek-influenced Harris house (page 111). It became Brown Alumni House in 1956.

At the opening of the century single-family houses far outnumbered other classes of dwellings in Providence, and only about five percent of all dwellings housed more than two families.⁴² A few years later came the invasion of three-deckers, erected in great numbers⁴³ and contributing more to the disfigurement of Providence and to the fire menace of the city than any type of building yet erected. The trend in multiple dwellings was climaxed by the apartment house, the first noteworthy example of which was the Minden



Ellen D. Sharpe house, 1912, 87 Prospect Street.

(Frank W. Woods, architect), an eight-story building of brick, stucco and terra cotta, erected at 123 Waterman Street in 1912. This was followed by two three-story apartment houses (also designed by Woods), namely, the Buena Vista at 230 Butler Avenue and the Washington at 98 Irving Avenue. It is significant that the Providence Business Directory listed no apartment houses in 1910, and 28 in 1918.

World War I began in Europe in the summer of 1914. On June 3, 1916, over 52,000 men and women marched in a preparedness parade through the streets of Providence. Germany commenced unrestricted submarine warfare in February, 1917, which was followed by a declaration by President Woodrow Wilson, April 6, that a state of war existed with

41. Eleazer B. Homer, who joined the firm of Clarke and Howe in 1907, resumed independent practice in 1913; in that year the original firm name of Clarke and Howe was resumed.

42. U. S. Census of 1900.

43. The Inspector of buildings reported the erection of 198 three-deckers in the single year 1911.

that nation. During the succeeding 19 months civic progress in Providence was halted by war activities. There were liberty bond campaigns and Red Cross drives; tunnels and bridges were patrolled, and a waterfront zone was established from which aliens were barred. Registration days were held and a military census was conducted. The first draft quota left for camp September 5, 1917. Rhode Island's contribution to the war included a total of 22,817 fighting men of whom 1,693 were casualties.

Billy Sunday conducted a revival campaign during the fall of 1918 in a large tabernacle erected near Elmwood Avenue. This was loaned for several secular events, including a patriotic meeting addressed by ex-President Theodore Roosevelt October 17, and a concert by the Paris Symphony Orchestra October 28.

Following the armistice November 11, 1918, a victory arch (J. Howard Adams, architect) was erected over the north trafficway of Exchange Place, through which the troops of the 103rd Field Artillery, American Expeditionary Force, marched in a welcome-home parade February 11, 1919. Wartime prohibition went into effect July 1, 1919, and National prohibition, provided by adoption of the 18th amendment to the United States Constitution, became effective January 16, 1920, without ratification by Rhode Island.⁴⁴ On June 6, 1920, the General Assembly ratified the 19th amendment, authorizing women's suffrage, which was adopted August 18, and the women of the state voted for the first time at the National election November 2 of that year.

44. The prohibition amendment was repealed December 12, 1933.



R.I.H.S.

Nickel Theatre, Westminster Street, formerly the Dime Museum.



R.I.H.S.

View of the upper harbor toward southeast, c. 1920, showing steamboat docks and Point Street Bridge.

CHAPTER 18 1920 - 1930

THE years following World War I were productive of many changes affecting the lives of the people. An ordinance was enacted in 1920 providing for daylight saving annually from April to September, during which time clocks were set ahead one hour. The establishment of local radio stations, connected with nation-wide networks, and the installation of radio sets in homes, brought entertainment and news of the world to thousands of families. Rum running, bootlegging and hijacking were by-products of national prohibition. Dial telephones were introduced in one exchange of the telephone company in 1923 and within fifteen years were in general use throughout the city. Home comforts were enhanced by means of automatic refrigeration, gas heat, vacuum cleaners, electric ranges, and air conditioning. The use of the automobile for transportation made the recreational areas and shore resorts easily accessible. Suburban trolley lines and river steamboats gradually were discontinued and the railroads curtailed their schedules.

Consideration was given in the early twenties to the erection of a suitable memorial to the men of Providence who gave their lives in the World War. A number of plans were submitted, and rejected, including an auditorium, a home for war veterans, a memorial arch at Roger Williams Park, a tower on Exchange Place, and an obelisk on Market Square. Finally, in 1926, the City Council determined to erect a monument on Post Office Square, and held a competition for its design.¹ The judges selected the plan submitted by Paul P. Cret of Philadelphia, providing for a granite shaft rising from a base and crowned by a heroic figure (illustration, page 286). Its construction was authorized by the council June 25, 1927 and the monument was dedicated on Armistice Day, November 11, 1929. Post Office Square was then changed in name to Memorial Square.

An act authorizing cities in the state to enact zoning ordinances was passed by the General Assembly April 22, 1921.² Its purpose was to exercise orderly control of municipal growth and development by establishing various classes of districts, in each of which restrictions as to use, height and area would be imposed upon buildings thereafter erected. Zoning was first put in operation in the city of New York in 1916 and the adoption of an ordinance for Providence was advocated by the city plan commission in 1919.³ Acting under authority contained in the state enabling act the City Council directed its committee on ordinances, in 1922, to prepare a zoning ordinance and provided an appropriation whereby Robert Whitten of Cleveland, Ohio, was engaged as consultant.

Whitten transmitted his report, together with the draft of a zoning ordinance and a map showing the proposed division of the city into zoned districts, in April, 1923.⁴ Public hearings were held, and on June 6 the City Council approved the plan by enactment of an ordinance "zoning the city of Providence and establishing use, height and area districts therein."⁵ The ordinance established a zoning board of review of five members with power

1. The competition was conducted under the code of the American Institute of Architects with Henry H. Kendall of Boston acting as professional advisor.

2. P.L., 1921, chapter 2069; General Laws, 1938, chapter 342.

3. City Plan Commission, *Sixth Annual Report*, 1919, p. 41.

4. Joint Standing Committee on Ordinances, *The Providence Zone Plan*, (Providence, 1923).

5. C.O., 1923, chapter 370.

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to make exceptions to its provisions under specified rules. Arthur Henius, a member of the city plan commission, was appointed chairman of the board June 11, 1923.

A permissive act was passed by the General Assembly in 1923, enabling the city of Providence to enact a building code, including provision for the appointment of a building board of review.⁶ The construction, repair and maintenance of buildings in the city was governed, at that time, by outmoded building laws, enacted in 1895 (page 161) and by certain state laws applicable to all cities and towns in Rhode Island. The latter included requirements for fire escapes on certain buildings, safety provisions for elevators, means for protecting employees during erection of buildings, and an act to diminish danger to life in case of fire, with particular reference to exits in public buildings.⁷ Prior to the enactment of the state enabling act a building code was drafted by an advisory committee⁸ and transmitted to the committee on ordinances. A building ordinance, based upon that draft, was adopted by the council and went into effect January 1, 1927.⁹ It forbade the erection of wooden buildings in the fire district and required certain types of structures to be fireproof. An important provision of the ordinance was a requirement for incombustible roof covering for all new buildings and an order that all existing wood shingle roofs should be re-covered within ten years. Building operations were permitted only upon issuance of a permit by the inspector of buildings¹⁰ and appeals from his decisions were subject to consideration by the building board of review. The building law was coordinated with the zoning ordinance by a provision for the appointment of a zoning assistant in the building inspector's office.

One of the most noteworthy projects of Mayor Gainer's administration was the planning and execution of a new water supply system. This originated in the passage of a council resolution, January 7, 1913, creating a committee to investigate means of providing the city with a supply of water adequate for its future needs. Two years later, pursuant to testimony of experts that the current yield of water from the 43-year old Pawtuxet system (page 135) was insufficient for the city's calculated growth, a water supply board was created by the General Assembly and its powers defined.¹¹ The board organized April 24, 1915, and adopted a plan for the construction of a reservoir in the town of Scituate, to be supplied by the north branch of Pawtuxet river and its numerous tributaries, constituting a watershed of 92 square miles. Frank E. Winsor was appointed chief engineer and the plans were developed and the project carried out under his direction. Work was started in 1915 and the system was put in operation September 30, 1926.

Construction of the reservoir, formed by the Kent dam, involved the submerging of the villages of South Scituate, Richmond and Ashland and the reconstruction of about 23 miles of highways. The reservoir had an estimated storage capacity of 37 billion gallons and a daily yield, based on an annual rainfall of 46 inches, of 85 million gallons, nearly five times that of the former system. From a filter plant, erected near Kent dam, water was discharged by gravity through a five-mile aqueduct, terminating in a siphon chamber west of Phenix Avenue in Cranston. Two pipe lines led away from that chamber connecting,

6. P.L., 1923, chapter 485.

7. P.L., 1911, chapter 173.

8. The advisory committee consisted of representatives of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Providence Engineering Society, Providence Real Estate Exchange, Insurance Association of Providence, Builders and Traders Exchange, Master Builders Association, and the City Plan Commission.

9. C.O., 1926, No. 408. The ordinance, with amendments, remained in effect until the adoption of a new building code in 1957.

10. Spencer B. Hopkins retired as inspector of buildings soon after the new ordinance went into effect, after serving 43 years, and was succeeded by George W. Huntley.

11. P.L., 1915, chapter 1278. On completion of the project in 1926 the former reservoirs were abandoned. The main dam was dedicated to the memory of ex-Mayor Gainer October 15, 1949.

respectively, with the old system east of Reservoir Avenue and with a new covered reservoir on Neutaconkanut Hill. A gravity pipe line was laid from that reservoir to a pumping station on Bath Street, north of Woonasquatucket river, from which the water was boosted to Longview Reservoir (elevation 385) near Mineral Spring Avenue in North Providence. From that point water was supplied to sections of the city over 130 feet in elevation and high-pressure service was provided for fire hydrants. A new high-pressure pumping station was erected on Neutaconkanut Hill in 1935, replacing the Bath Street station.

The construction, improvement and maintenance of state highways, conducted by the State Board of Public Roads, consisted principally in re-surfacing the more heavily traveled arteries until 1917, in which year the General Assembly approved the Federal Aid road act of 1916 and appropriated state funds equal to the Federal allotment due Rhode Island. Thereafter the board of roads carried out a systematic program of highway and bridge construction in which many of the old lines and contours were altered and a more permanent type of pavement laid. About 60 miles of new or reconstructed state roads were completed by 1930. The main highways, approaching the metropolitan area of Providence through Warwick, Cranston, Johnston, Smithfield, North Providence, Cumberland and East Providence, and linking with the city arteries, were paved with macadam, bituminous concrete, cement concrete, or other durable materials.

A department of State Police was created by the General Assembly April 2, 1925,¹² composed of a superintendent, a captain, a lieutenant, and 21 men, with headquarters at North Scituate. Colonel Everitte St. J. Chaffee of Providence was appointed superintendent by Governor Pothier.

Mount Hope Toll Bridge, opened to travel October 24, 1929 across Mount Hope bay from Bristol to Portsmouth, provided an important link in the state highway system which permitted, for the first time, a direct highway route entirely within the state from Providence to Newport. The bridge was erected by a commission created by the General Assembly April 28, 1925.¹³ It has a wire cable suspension span, 135 feet above tidewater in the center, 1200 feet long, and its total length, including viaduct approaches, is a little over a mile.¹⁴ Upon its completion the old Bristol ferry was discontinued after more than two centuries of operation.

Important highway and bridge construction projects were undertaken on the lower East Side during the 1920s. When the first Point Street Bridge was erected (page 145) the city neglected to provide an adequate approach to its easterly terminus at South Water Street where a small pond¹⁵ obstructed a direct connection with Wickenden Street. A narrow lane (Cent Street) already extended northeasterly from South Water Street, north of the pond, and Bridge Street was laid out along its south rim, winding into Link Street which intersected Wickenden. Eventually the pond was filled and Bridge Street, later widened to 50 feet, continued until 1921 as the only means of approaching the bridge from the east. In that year the first highway improvement project was carried out under the excess condemnation act (page 219), including the widening of Bridge Street from South Water to Wickenden and the widening of Wickenden Street from Bridge Street northerly to Transit. The excess land taken included the triangle bounded by South Main, Wickenden and Bridge streets, a part of which was occupied by the vacated Household Sewing Machine building (page 173). That area, identified as Burnside Square, was transferred

12. P.L., 1925, chapter 588.

13. P.L., 1925, chapter 673.

14. *Report of Mount Hope Toll Bridge Commission* (Providence, 1926).

15. The pond was a remnant of Mile End Cove. See map, page 10.



Photo by William Mills & Sons

View down College Hill, c. 1930, showing Court House, 1877, (left); Hospital Trust Building, 1918, (center); and Samuel Westcott house, late 18th century (right).

by the city to the park department in 1915. It was taken for a freeway project in 1955.

In 1926 construction of a third Point Street Bridge was started under direction of Public Works Commissioner Milton H. Bronsdon. This was steel construction, 60 feet wide, with a trussed draw span. The draw was built at Fox Point and floated on scows into position in August, 1927 and lowered to the central turnstile as the tide receded. The bridge was reopened to traffic August 16 of that year.

A new Washington Bridge spanning Seekonk river, designed by Clarence W. Hudson of New York, was constructed between 1928 and 1930 under authority of an act passed by the General Assembly April 12, 1923, creating a Washington Bridge commission. Preliminary work had been undertaken by the State Board of Public Roads in 1921,¹⁶ and a location determined north of the former span (page 163) with approaches starting at the corner of Tockwotton and Ives Street in Providence and terminating at the corner of Taunton Avenue and Brow Street in East Providence, a total length of 2400 feet. The project was financed by bridge loans approved by the people in 1926 and 1928. The structure is 80 feet wide and has a clearance of 43 feet above tidewater. A double-leaf bascule span permits the passage of water craft through a 100-foot channel. The remainder of the bridge is composed of reinforced concrete arches, about 100 feet on centers, springing from piers. Gano Street underpasses the westerly arch in Providence and the railroad runs beneath the easterly arch in East Providence. Following the opening of the bridge its predecessor, erected in 1885, was removed.

During the construction of Washington Bridge the city undertook the layout of Fox Point Boulevard¹⁷ as a connecting link with Point Street Bridge. This involved the widening of Tockwotton Street from Ives to Brook with a westerly extension curving into Bridge Street at its intersection with Wickenden, providing two 40-foot roadways and a central park strip. Among the properties condemned for the highway were portions of Tockwotton Park and the Home for Aged Women, the Traverse Street car barn, and the plant of the Textile Finishing Machinery Company.

Upon the establishment of the main line railroad in 1848 (page 115), extending through the city at grade a distance of seven miles, one-half of which length closely paralleled the inland waterways, a handicap was imposed on the highway development of Providence. During the last half of the century grade separations were established at the principal highway crossings, but not sufficient in number or width for modern traffic requirements. The railroad increased the area of its north freight yard between 1918 and 1924, necessitating the abandonment of various highways and the relocation of portions of Smithfield Avenue and Silver Spring Street. Two steel-trussed bridges overpassing the freight yard, about 3400 feet apart, were erected by the railroad, replacing former bridges, one at Branch Avenue and the other at Smithfield Avenue as relocated. These improved traffic conditions only by providing sturdier construction and somewhat wider roadways. In 1930 the railroad erected a steel skew bridge over the tracks at Roger Williams Avenue connecting Elmwood and Reservoir avenues, in replacement of a narrow foot bridge, that created a new highway artery. Nineteen highways now crossed the railroad by grade separations, averaging three to each linear mile.¹⁸

16. State Board of Public Roads, *Preliminary Report of the Investigation of Washington Bridge*, 1922.

17. Renamed George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard, in 1947, in honor of the well-known actor (1878-1942) who was born on Wickenden Street.

18. Further grade separations were provided by the Olneyville by-pass (page 282), opened in 1952, at which time plans were in preparation for a north-south freeway to overpass the railroad property, the highways and the river in Woonasquatucket Valley.

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The section of North Main Street, from the North Burial Ground southerly to Randall Street, was widened to 99 feet in 1922, in extension of the highway project carried out in 1882 (page 160). A part of the land, taken by excess condemnation, was added to North Burial Ground. By a subsequent project, in 1931, the North Main Street widening was continued southerly to Benefit Street, involving the condemnation of land on the western side of the highway and the absorption of Stampers Street (page 24). This provided a maximum width of about 150 feet with two 40-foot roadways and landscaped center islands, identified as Captain J. Carleton Davis Boulevard.



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Air view of civic center from southeast c. 1924. State House and railroad freight yards in distance.

Ever since the erection of the Market House in 1773 the Weybosset Bridge area had been headquarters for market vendors. In course of time the warehouses along South Water and Dyer streets became occupied chiefly by fruit and produce merchants and portions of the highways, surrounding the open parts of the river, were leased to market gardeners for early morning trade and to Christmas tree vendors in the yuletide season. Canal Street, from Steeple Street to Smith, was used principally by wholesale meat dealers some of whom

occupied buildings, leased by the city, over Moshassuck river. Freight cars were drawn by dummy engines over the rails on Dyer and South Water streets, from which bananas and other produce were discharged and transported by long lines of men to the cellars of the warehouses. The first movement toward a more appropriate market location was made by a group of produce dealers who organized the Governor Dyer Cooperative Market in 1918 and established an outdoor market on a four-acre tract in Woonasquatucket valley between Promenade Street and Davis Park. This was followed by the incorporation of the Providence Terminal Produce Market in 1927 and the erection of a market building, 900 feet long, on former railroad property on the south side of Harris Avenue, extending westerly from Kinsley Avenue. Most of the Dyer and South Water Street merchants removed to the terminal building, and the city ended the market gardeners' leases of highway spaces adjacent to the river.

There ensued a series of highway, bridge and building activities that continued, almost without pause, for six years.

Providence County Court House had its inception in a resolution, approved by the General Assembly May 31, 1923, creating a commission to consider the selection of a site and the preparation of preliminary plans.¹⁹ That commission held a competition²⁰ and reported to the assembly in January, 1924, recommending the site bounded by South Main, College, Benefit and Hopkins streets, and the design submitted by Jackson, Robertson and Adams which had been given the highest award by the judges of the competition. The acquisition of land and the erection of the building were delegated by the assembly to a second court house commission April 28, 1925.²¹ On the northeast corner of the block chosen stood the Court House, erected in 1877 (page 150), which the new building was to replace. The remainder of the site was acquired in 1926 and 1927, including the Woods Building, the old United States Court House, and the Counting House Corporation's building on South Main Street; Mauran Block on Benefit Street; and Stephen Hopkins house (page 30) on Hopkins Street. All were razed, except the Hopkins house which was moved in 1928 to a lot on the southwest corner of Benefit and Hopkins streets and restored under direction of Norman M. Isham.

The cornerstone of the Court House was laid June 12, 1928. The southerly section was first constructed, while the former building continued in use, and was opened April 2, 1930. The completed building was dedicated September 28, 1933. The cost of construction and equipment was financed by three bond issues approved, respectively, in 1925, 1927 and 1929.²² The building has nine stories, the fifth of which is entered from the Benefit Street level. The exterior walls are brick with granite and limestone trimming and the design, composed of small units, is reminiscent of the traditional architecture of the Early Republican period. A tower rises from the center to a height of 250 feet above South Main

19. A.&R., 1923, p. 384.

20. Like the War Memorial competition (page 233) this was conducted in accordance with the American Institute of Architects code with Henry H. Kendall as professional advisor.

21. P.L., 1925, chapter 675, amended. The membership of the first commission included Jesse H. Metcalf, chairman, ex-Governor James H. Higgins, John E. Canning, Judge Charles F. Stearns, Judge J. Jerome Hahn, Harry A. Sanderson, Frederick S. Peck, Alderman Rush Sturges, Alderman John F. Conaty, and Councilman Percy A. Harden. The second commission included Judges Stearns and Hahn and Messrs. Peck, Canning, Conaty, Sanderson and Sturges of the former commission, Senator Felix Hebert, and William B. Greenough. Mr. Peck, who was elected chairman, resigned in December, 1926; he was succeeded by Mr. Greenough as chairman and Edwin A. Burlingame was appointed a member in Mr. Peck's stead.

22. *The Providence Court House* (Providence, 1933).

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Street, with clock faces on the four sides. The building provides quarters for the Supreme, Superior and Juvenile courts, offices for the attorney general and other officers, jury rooms, and the state law library (illustration, page 284).

The General Assembly authorized the court house commission, April 10, 1929, to acquire the land in front of the Court House,²³ bounded by South Main, College, South Water and Hutchinson streets. That action was followed by a resolution of the City Council, approved September 24, 1929, for condemning, for highway purposes, certain land within the area and a strip on the west side of South Main Street between Hutchinson and Crawford streets.²⁴ Those acts led to the removal of the picturesque row of warehouses which had stood on South Water Street for over a century (illustration, page 120). The land taken, exclusive of the portions condemned for highways, was divided by a line centering on the Court House, the state retaining the southerly portion and the city acquiring the northerly half which it earmarked as a site for a hall of records (see pages 257, 283). A strip 60 feet wide, centering on the axial line, was allocated as an approach to the Court House. The land, vacated of buildings, between Hutchinson and Crawford streets, remained in private ownership and was converted into a parking lot. South Main Street was reconstructed to a width of 60 feet from College to Crawford Street in 1930.²⁵

Crawford Bridge, together with its extensions along Dyer and South Water streets, was rebuilt between 1928 and 1930. The abutment walls, 132 feet apart, erected in 1897 (page 180), were maintained and new intermediate walls were built, replacing the former wood piles. These walls were constructed of reinforced concrete on pile foundations, with granite-block piers extending upward to a heavy steel superstructure. The open water area between Market Square and Crawford Square was continued, the sidewalks supported by cantilever beams.

The city constructed an incineration plant on a section of the former cove lands at 256 Kinsley Avenue, in 1927. This was a two-story building with two incinerating units, each having a capacity for burning 80 tons of garbage and refuse daily. Upon its completion and operation by the department of public works previous contracts for the collection of municipal garbage were terminated. New regulations required the wrapping of garbage in paper before its collection by the department. The plant was abandoned following the erection of an incinerator at the Field's Point estate (page 256).

When the United Electric Railways Company took over operation of the traction lines in 1921 (page 217) there were 98 miles of street car rails within the city. To offset a continuing loss in revenue various economies were effected, including the institution of one-man trolleys on March 3, 1922. In that year the company commenced the operation of buses, with lines established to Oakland Beach and Arctic July 3 and on Promenade Street October 15. The first city trolley line to be discontinued was the Friendship Street route April 30, 1925. Suburban line buses, operated by independent companies, gradually superseded interurban and interstate trolleys.

The public park estates were under the superintendence of Jeremiah J. Triggs from 1921 to 1929, during which period Prospect Terrace, Blackstone Park and King Park were increased in area and Burnside Square and Triggs Park were added to the system. In 1925 the city accepted Barton A. Ballou's gift of the Page estate, adjacent to Prospect Terrace (page 148); in the following year a Congdon Street committee was organized, under direction of Mrs. Howard D. Day, through whose efforts further parcels of land were acquired and

23. P.L., 1929, chapter 1345.

24. C.C. Resolution, No. 406, 1929.

25. The realignment of College Street between South Main and South Water was deferred until 1935.

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transferred to the city, extending the terrace northerly to Bowen Street. The enlarged estate provided a site for the monument to Roger Williams, erected in 1938 (page 268). A small tract adjoining Blackstone Park (page 147) on the west was deeded to the city by Miss Margarethe L. Dwight in 1926, increasing the area of that park to 24 acres. A gift of land by Etta V. Salisbury, in 1926, enlarged King Park (page 222) to 16 acres. The city purchased a portion of the Obadiah Brown estate on Chalkstone Avenue in 1928, and



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Temple of Music, 1924, Roger Williams Park.

acquired additional land the following year, extending northward to the State Home and School estate;²⁶ that joint area, comprising 163 acres (page 219), was developed for a municipal golf course which was named Triggs Memorial Park in honor of the park superintendent who died in office July 31, 1929.

26. A state institution for dependent and neglected children, opened in 1885 on the 70-acre Walnut Grove estate, so-called, on Mount Pleasant Avenue; now known as the Children's Center of Rhode Island.

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The principal development at Roger Williams Park, during Jeremiah Triggs' superintendence, was the erection, in 1924, of the Temple of Music (William T. Aldrich of Boston, architect, illustration, page 241), a small classic structure with an open colonnade near the shore of Cunliff pond, with funds received under a bequest of William C. Benedict for a monument to and illustrative of music. It was dedicated September 21, 1924, at a concert given by the Providence Festival Chorus under leadership of John B. Archer, assisted by the United States Marine Band of Washington, D. C.

A tract of filled land, extending from Waterman Street to Pitman, near Red Bridge, was conveyed to the city by deed of gift from Mr. and Mrs. S. Foster Hunt in September, 1929 and was developed and landscaped under direction of Ernest K. Thomas who succeeded Triggs that year as park superintendent. A bronze statue, symbolic of the spirit of youth, executed by Gail Sherman Corbett, was unveiled November 16, 1933, in memory of Constance Witherby, Mrs. Hunt's daughter, who died in 1929 and whose name was given to the park.

Five playground sites, aggregating about eleven acres, were acquired by the city between 1919 and 1930, and two acres were added to Richardson Park, a playground in South Providence purchased in 1906. Several ball fields were laid out and field houses were erected. The total acquisitions of parks and playgrounds, during that period, added about 188 acres to the public park estates.

The City Council, by resolution approved April 11, 1925, authorized the committee on ordinances to make a study and investigation of the traffic needs and requirements of Providence and to report to the council a comprehensive traffic and thoroughfare plan for the entire city, designed to meet the probable demands for a long period of years. That committee, acting on authority granted by the council June 5 of the same year, engaged Robert Whitten as its consultant. His report, transmitted to the committee on ordinances November 16, 1926,²⁷ was comprehensive in scope, extending beyond the city limits and coordinating the state highway system and the metropolitan park properties with the proposed city arteries. The city projects included several express routes with viaducts over Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck valleys and a bridge across the upper harbor. The metropolitan projects included parkways along Seekonk, Pawtuxet and Pocasset rivers, a belt parkway, and a high-level bridge across Providence river connecting Field's Point with Kettle Point. The plan, after its endorsement at a public hearing, was presented to the City Council November 19, 1926. In the following spring the General Assembly passed an act creating a thoroughfare plan commission, but this was repealed by request of the City Council in 1928 and the project was abandoned.

A survey of the organization, administration, plant and financing of the Providence public school system was made in 1923-24 under direction of Dr. George D. Strayer of Columbia University.²⁸ It included an inspection of the school plant, consisting of 84 primary, 17 grammar, and 4 high schools, for the purpose of rating the buildings with respect to site qualifications, building characteristics, service systems, and the number and character of rooms. Under the rating only five buildings were found to be satisfactory; of the others, 33 needed important changes in order to improve conditions and 67 had little to commend them. It is significant that of these schoolhouses 30 were built before 1880,

27. Joint Special Committee on Ordinances, *Providence Traffic and Thoroughfare Plan*, 1926.

28. *Report of the survey of Certain Aspects of the Public School System of Providence, Rhode Island*, made by Division of Field Studies, Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, George D. Strayer, Director (Providence, 1924).

49 between 1880 and 1900, and 26 after 1900; about one-third were wooden buildings. Among the recommendations made in the Strayer report and subsequently put into effect were a reorganization of the school committee, to be composed of seven members to be elected on a non-partisan ballot;²⁹ a reduction in the number of schoolhouses and an increase in the size of buildings thereafter erected;³⁰ and a revision of school grading to provide for elementary schools (first to sixth grades), junior high schools (seventh to ninth grades), senior high schools (tenth to twelfth grades), a trade school, and various special and evening schools.³¹

The Commercial (later Central) High School was erected in 1923 on the block bounded by Summer, Pond and Winter streets and Montcalm Court, immediately west of the existing high school group, and an addition was made in 1926. The preliminary layout and the engineering plans were drawn under direction of William E. Hartwell, Commissioner of Public Buildings³² and the work was carried on by Hoppin and Field, providing three stories and a basement with walls of brick and terra cotta, crowned by a pediment and a flat roof. Upon its completion the former English High School (page 150) became its annex.

An architectural staff was organized within the public buildings department in 1920 for the design and supervision of municipal buildings and, except in the case of the Commercial High School, the employment of private architects by the city was discontinued for a quarter century. The city-designed school buildings erected in the twenties included a high school gymnasium (1924) at Pond and Spring streets, a central heating plant (1922), and five elementary schools, namely, Nelson Street (1921), Sackett Street (1924), Summit Avenue (1924), Reservoir Avenue (1925) and Kenyon Street (1928).

During the latter years of President Faunce's administration at Brown the back campus underwent a comprehensive building development. Arnold Biological Laboratory (Clarke and Howe, architects, 1915), given by Dr. Oliver H. Arnold, was built near the site of the former Lincoln Field grandstand (page 193). A memorial arch was erected opposite Manning Street in 1921, honoring the men of Brown who died in World War I. Other buildings in that area included Jesse Metcalf Laboratory (1923) for the department of Chemistry, given by Jesse H. Metcalf; Hegeman Hall (1926), a dormitory given by trustees under the will of John Rogers Hegeman; and Littlefield Hall (1930), a dormitory donated by George L. Littlefield; all designed in the Middle States Colonial style by Day and Klauder of Philadelphia. Marston Hall for romance languages (Welles Bosworth, architect, 1926) was erected at the corner of Brook and Manning streets, the gift of Edgar L. Marston and friends. The university, from time to time, had acquired tracts of land, aggregating 28 acres, in the northerly part of the Neck and erected, in 1925, a concrete football stadium (Gavin Hadden, engineer, Paul P. Cret, consulting architect) at the corner of Sessions Street and Elmgrove Avenue, and a concrete baseball stand on land on the easterly side of Elmgrove Avenue, named Aldrich Field for its principal donors, H. L. and C. T. Aldrich. A gymnasium was erected in 1927 (Clarke and Howe, architects) at the south end of the field, later named Marvel Gymnasium for Frederick W. Marvel, director of athletics for many years. Upon its terrace a bronze statue of "Bruno" was set up, the gift of alumni and

29. P.L., 1925, chapter 680. The school committee previously was composed of 30 members, three elected from each ward.

30. Of the buildings in use in 1923, 37 contained only four rooms each. During the next ten years over 30 of the older and smaller schoolhouses were vacated and eight large buildings erected (see page 263).

31. By this grading the former primary and grammar schools were discontinued as such. Of the former grammar schoolhouses continued, 16 became elementary schools and three were changed to junior high schools.

32. The Public Buildings Department was created in 1913.

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undergraduates in 1928. Andrews Field (page 193) was sold by the university and was platted into small house lots.

Pembroke College was further developed by the erection of two buildings of Colonial design on Cushing Street, identified as Metcalf Hall (Andrews, Rantoul and Jones of Boston, architects, 1919), a dormitory given by Stephen O. Metcalf and others, and Alumnæ Hall (Andrews, Jones, Briscoe and Whitmore, architects, 1926), a building for social and assembly purposes given by alumnæ and Mr. Metcalf.

President Faunce resigned in 1928 (he died the following year) and was succeeded by Dr. Clarence A. Barbour (1929-37). In 1931 an enlargement of Rockefeller Hall (page 205) was undertaken with an easterly extension on Waterman Street, connected with the original building by an archway over the driveway leading to the campus from Waterman



Courtesy of Brown Alumni Monthly

Faunce House, Brown University. Building at left, originally Rockefeller Hall, 1903; Addition at right, 1931.

Street. The addition, designed by Howe and Church, contained a theatre, a cafeteria, and offices for undergraduate activities. It was the gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., at whose request Rockefeller Hall, with its addition, was re-named Faunce House (illustration above).

Rhode Island College of Pharmacy and Allied Sciences, a degree-granting institution chartered in 1902, erected a building (William R. Walker and Son, architects) at 235 Benefit Street in 1924, on the site of the former Young Ladies School (page 194). The college became a unit of the University of Rhode Island in 1957.

1920 - 1930

Rhode Island School of Design erected, in 1926, the Eliza G. Radeke Building (William T. Aldrich, architect), adjacent to Pendleton House (page 207) and conforming to the Colonial design of that house. It is five stories in height and its main floor, containing a museum of fine arts and entered from Benefit Street, is on the fourth level. The museum is connected by corridors and stairways with the school galleries on Waterman Street.

LaSalle Academy, a parochial school which had been located on Fountain Street since 1872³³, acquired a tract of 43 acres at Smith Street and Academy Avenue (page 219) in 1924, on which a large schoolhouse (John W. Donahue, architect, illustration below) was erected the following year.

Police precincts were increased in number to eight upon the erection of a new station on Chad Brown Street in 1929. New fire stations were built on Academy Avenue in 1927 and Rochambeau Avenue in 1929.

The Armory for Mounted Commands and the State Office Building, both financed by



LaSalle Academy, 1924, Smith Street and Academy Avenue.

construction loans, were built in Providence by the state during this period. The armory (William R. Walker and Son, architects), erected at 1051 North Main Street and consisting of a drill shed (built in 1913) and a three-story head house, was completed October 9, 1925. The office building (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects, illustration, page 246) was erected on a three-acre tract on the north side of Smith Street, opposite the State House, a part of which had constituted the Albert W. Smith estate including a three-story house erected in 1800. Construction was started May 14, 1927 and the building was completed August 7, 1928; a west wing was added in 1935.

The post-war period was productive of quite a number of business buildings. The Citizens Savings Bank,³⁴ erected in 1921 on the site of the former Hoyle Tavern (page 54)

33. The school expanded to an adjacent building, in 1901, which was reconstructed for its use. LaSalle Square, laid out in 1914 (page 215), took its name from the institution, which bordered it on the west. The building was razed and replaced by the Bureau of Police and Fire Building in 1940 (page 261).

34. The bank was established in 1871 and first located at 846 Westminster Street.



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View showing State Office Building, 1928, (left); Saint Patrick's Church, 1916, (center); State House, 1900, (right).

at the junction of Westminster and Cranston streets, and the Providence Gas Company Building, which replaced the Taylor and Symonds Building (1860) at 100 Weybosset Street in 1924 (both designed by Clarke and Howe) followed Colonial precedent. The design of the Morris Plan Building (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects, 1926) at 25 Canal Street was inspired by the Market House and the nine-story Insurance Building (Clarke and Howe, architects, 1929) at 31 Canal Street was crowned by a parapet reminiscent of the Roger Williams Bank Building.³⁵ Old Colony House (Thomas H. James of Boston, architect), a nine-story building erected in 1927 by the Old Colony Cooperative Bank at 58 Weybosset Street, replacing Harkness Block (1866), and the Providence National Bank³⁶ (Howe and Church, architects, 1929), erected in replacement of the Lyceum Building (page 126) at 100 Westminster Street, both recall elements of the Early Republican era.

A departure from traditional forms is noted in other business buildings of the period. The limestone frontispiece of Kresge Building (1927), at 191 Westminster Street, was a harbinger of a new era. Modern technique as applied to skyscrapers, with setbacks at successive levels, is exemplified in the Industrial Trust Building³⁷ (Walker and Gillette of New York, architects, 1926-28), erected on Exchange Place in replacement of Butler Exchange (page 149) and Brownell Building. It was the tallest structure yet to be erected in Providence, its limestone walls rising 418 feet to the top of the great lantern above the 26th story.³⁸ The main banking room occupies the ground floor, flanked by a corridor extending from Exchange Place to Westminster Street.

The decade of the twenties marked the culmination of the trend in theatrical patronage from legitimate stage shows to motion pictures. A city ordinance was enacted in 1926, permitting Sunday performances. The erection, in 1930, of Loew's State Theatre, a picture palace at 220 Weybosset Street seating 3200 persons, was followed the next year by the closing of Providence Opera House (page 153). While professional stage shows thereafter were comparatively rare events, interest in the drama was kept alive by numerous amateur organizations, including Sock and Buskin of Brown and The Players.³⁹

Infantry Hall, the only large concert auditorium in the city, was closed in 1926.⁴⁰ An-

35. See illustration, page 254. These buildings replaced Parsons Block and Hanley Building. Morris Plan Bank was reorganized as Plantations Bank in 1946 and subsequently moved its offices to 61 Weybosset Street. The building at 25 Canal Street was occupied by the Workmen's Compensation Commission in 1955. The Insurance Building was acquired by the Blue Cross Hospital Service Corporation Plan in 1946.

36. The Providence National Bank was a merger of the Providence Bank (page 51) and the Merchants National Bank (page 124). Subsequent to 1950 it was united with the Union Trust Company (page 209) and the Industrial Trust Company as the Industrial National Bank.

37. See illustration, page 248. The former building of the Industrial Trust Company at 49 Westminster Street was continued as an office building.

38. As the site bordered on the original shore line of the cove, and included a portion of Waterman's marsh (page 35), foundations of considerable depth were required. The height of the building exceeded the limitations prescribed by the zoning ordinance and an exception was granted by the board of review.

39. Sock and Buskin, organized in 1902, performed in Providence Opera House and other auditoriums until permanent stage facilities were provided in Faunce House Theatre in 1929. The Players, established in 1909 as successor to the Talma Club (page 111), gave their earlier productions in Talma Theatre, Infantry Hall and Elks Auditorium. The club purchased the Church of the Saviour at 400 Benefit Street in 1932 and converted it into Barker Playhouse, so named in memory of Henry A. Barker for conspicuous activities both in the Talma Club and The Players.

40. See page 154. Recitals and chamber music were heard at the Eloise, Churchill House, Memorial Hall, Providence Plantations Auditorium and Elks Auditorium, the latter occupying the first floor of Elks Home (G. Henri Desmond, architect, 1914) at 241 Washington Street. After three years of idleness Infantry Hall was reopened in 1929 for a few seasons. The building was destroyed by fire October 4, 1942.



R.I.H.S.

Westminster Street, c. 1932, showing (left to right) Turks Head Building (1913), new Industrial Trust Building (1928) and old Industrial Trust Building (1892).

other concert hall was contemplated in the new Masonic Temple on Francis Street, the erection of which was started in 1927 (Osgood and Osgood, architects) but, upon completion of the walls and roof-construction, work was suspended.⁴¹ Rhode Island Auditorium (Funk and Wilcox of Boston, architects), a commercial enterprise, was erected at 1111 North Main Street in 1925, containing an arena used for a skating rink and other purposes, surrounded by 5800 fixed seats in tiers.

Three Catholic churches of Romanesque design were erected during the period, namely, Our Lady of Mount Carmel (John F. O'Malley, architect, 1925) at 64 Brayton Avenue; Saint Adelbert's (Ernest Ludorff of Bridgeport, Connecticut, architect, 1925) at 860 Atwells Avenue; and Our Lady of Lourdes (A. J. Murphy, architect, 1928) at 901 Atwells Avenue, the latter having an adjacent parochial school on Mongenais Street. Scandinavian design is reflected in Gloria Dei Lutheran Church on Hayes Street (Martin Hedwig, architect, 1928)



Temple Emanu El, 1928, 295 Morris Avenue.

and the modern trend in Temple Emanu El (Krokyn and Brown, architects, 1928, illustration above), a stone and brick synagogue at the corner of Morris Avenue and Sessions Street.

Rhode Island Hospital⁴² received a bequest from Jane Frances Brown for a building for private patients and erected Jane Brown Hospital (Kendall, Taylor and Company, architects), at the north end of the hospital grounds on Lockwood Street, which was opened in 1922. A training school for nurses was built in 1927.

41. See illustration, page 205. The unfinished building was purchased by the state in 1945 and the auditorium was opened in 1951 (page 279).

42. See page 137. Rhode Island Hospital was the recipient of a substantial sum from the proceeds of a unique block party known as the "Blockaid," held in June, 1922 under direction of Mrs. I. Harris Metcalf. The site was on Brown Street, which was closed to traffic from Power to George, and overflowed into the yards of abutting houses.



Photo by William Mills & Son

View of City Hall Park, c. 1930. In foreground Union Station (1898) and Bajinotti fountain (1902). In distance, left to right, R. I. College of Education (1898), Masonic Temple (c. 1929) and State House (1900).

1920 - 1930

Providence Lying-In Hospital and Homeopathic Hospital of Rhode Island established new estates on opposite sides of Pleasant Valley Parkway, in 1926, the former erected at 50 Maude Street and the latter at 825 Chalkstone Avenue.⁴³ Lying-In Hospital (Stevens and Lee, architects) is Elizabethan and Homeopathic Hospital (Kendall, Taylor and Company, architects) Colonial in design. A nurses' home and training school (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, Clarke and Howe, associated architects) was added to Homeopathic Hospital in 1927. An addition to Lying-In Hospital was under way in 1956 (Howe, Prout and Ekman, architects).

Saint Joseph's Hospital (page 191) was expanded in 1929 by the addition of a six-story wing on Peace Street (A. J. Murphy, architect), the funds for which were received from a diocesan charity drive.

The Knight Library Association, organized by Colonel Webster Knight in 1924, erected the Knight Memorial Library (Edward S. Tilton of New York, architect) at 275 Elmwood Avenue, a limestone building designed in the classic manner, for the use of the Elmwood



Photo, 1957

Providence-Biltmore Hotel, 1922, 11 Dorrance Street, now Sheraton-Biltmore.

Library Association.⁴⁴ Providence Public Library (page 187) increased its usefulness to the people by establishing neighborhood branches in various sections of the city. The vacated Hope Street Methodist Church (page 152) was acquired in 1928 and was remodeled for Tockwotton Branch Library. Small buildings were erected for the Wanskuck branch (1928) at 245 Veazie Street; Rochambeau branch (1930) at 708 Hope Street; South Providence branch (1930) at 441 Prairie Avenue (all designed by Howe and Church), and Smith's Hill branch (1932) at 31 Candace Street (Albert Harkness, architect). Other branches were

43. Lying-In Hospital, founded in 1885, was first located in the General James house at 12 Slocum Street and later in the Fletcher house at the corner of State and Field streets. Homeopathic Hospital, established in 1878, was located, successively, in the Nichols house at 151 Morris Avenue (later Morris Heights School) and 62 Jackson Street. It was changed in name to Roger Williams General Hospital February 19, 1947.

44. Elmwood Library Association was established in 1915 through activities of Mrs. Frederick E. Shaw, and first located in the Greenwich Street fire station.

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located at 15 Armington Avenue (Sprague House), 12 Olneyville Square (Olneyville Free Library) and the Broad Street School (Washington Park).

Providence Plantations Club, a women's group established in 1916,⁴⁵ erected a club house (Andrews, Jones, Briscoe and Whitmore, architects) on Abbott Park Place in 1927, containing an assembly hall, dining rooms, lounges, a library, a swimming pool and bed rooms. The principal facade conforms to the domestic architecture of the early 19th century.

Providence Biltmore Hotel (Warren and Wetmore of New York, architects) was erected in 1921-22 on a triangular area bounded by Dorrance, Washington and Eddy streets, the site of Butts Block, following the organization of a stock company under auspices of the Providence Chamber of Commerce. The building is L-shaped, its 19-story wings connected by a two-story entrance facade on Dorrance Street, and the design of its brick and stone walls is based on Italian Renaissance motives. A large ballroom occupies the top floor. It was re-named Sheraton-Biltmore after a change in ownership in 1947 (illustration, page 251).



768 Elmgrove Avenue, 1930.



Huntoon house, 1925, 55 Cooke Street.

Wayland Manor, a seven-story apartment hotel (Harry A. Lewis, architect), was erected at 500 Angell Street in 1922, on the site of the Banigan house (page 211). It was known for a number of years as the Sheraton, and reverted to its original name in 1947.

In spite of the modern trend in residential design, manifest in many sections of the United States, traditional forms were continued in Providence in the period after World War I. This may have been due in part to the local interest and pride in the Colonial style as exemplified by surviving houses of the early period, many of which were rehabilitated and converted into attractive homes. As a general rule the houses of the 1920s, although planned to meet modern requirements, were fabricated with walls and roofs of Colonial simplicity. Among these are the Huntoon house at 55 Cooke Street (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects, 1925, illustration above) and the Wood house at 72 Manning Street (Howe and Church, architects, 1930), both of which reflect the Early Republican period. By contrast is the Sharpe house at 86 Prospect Street (Parker, Thomas

45. The club was first opened in the Eloise on Franklin Street.

and Rice, architects, 1928), a large French-influenced dwelling of brick and limestone with an entrance composed of pink marble columns and a curved pediment.

A tract of about 40 acres in the northerly section of the Neck, originally constituting a portion of the great swamp (see map, page 14), was developed as a high-grade residential area, between 1917 and 1922, by John R. Freeman. The tract extended easterly from Morris Avenue along a slightly declining hillside across Taber, Elmgrove and Wayland avenues to Cole Avenue, and from Doyle Avenue southerly to Laurel Avenue through which Hazard Avenue, Freeman Parkway and Barberry Hill were constructed. Over 200 restricted house lots were platted, having an average of 8000 square feet each. Another tract of about the same size, located west of Blackstone Boulevard and extending from Rochambeau Avenue northward to Swan Point property, was platted by Blackstone Boulevard Realty Company into house lots from 8,000 to 11,000 square feet in area. The highway improvements, carried out between 1923 and 1930, included the extension of Elmgrove Avenue in a sweeping curve to Blackstone Boulevard, the extension of Cole Avenue northerly to Elmgrove, and the construction of several cross streets. While the earlier houses erected on the Freeman plat were conservative in design, with Colonial characteristics, several of those in the Elmgrove Avenue area were constructed of such a varied assortment of building materials as to suggest a sophisticated revival of the works of E. I. Nickerson and his contemporaries in the late 19th century (page 170). Exceptions to that trend were the large brick hipped-roof Bodell house (Harrie T. Lindenburg, architect, 1928) on a four-acre estate at 61 Intervale Road (razed in 1954), and a white brick Colonial-type house (William T. Aldrich, architect, 1930, illustration, page 252) at 768 Elmgrove Avenue.

By act of the General Assembly, in 1930,⁴⁶ the city charter was amended, increasing the number of wards in the city from 10 to 13, and providing for the election of one alderman and three councilmen from each ward. Extensive changes were made in the ward divisions, which were established, approximately, as follows: wards 1-3, the East Side; ward 4, the North End; wards 5-6, the Northwest Section; ward 7, the Olneyville area; wards 8-9, the Elmwood district; wards 10-11, South Providence; ward 12, the down town area; and ward 13, the central West Side.

46. P.L., 1930, chapter 1521.



View of Market Square and Canal Street, 1950, showing (left to right) Insurance (Blue Cross) Building, 1927; Morris Plan (Workman's Compensation) Building, 1926; School of Design Auditorium, 1950; Market House, 1773; Peoples Savings Bank, 1913; Metcalf Building, School of Design, 1936.

Photo by Rhode Island School of Design

CHAPTER 19 1930 - 1940

RHODE ISLAND, together with the rest of the nation, encountered a long period of depression which followed the financial collapse of 1929. Many industrial plants were closed, production was greatly curtailed, and unemployment reached a high level. Governor Norman S. Case (1928-33) called a special session of the General Assembly in November, 1931, to make provisions for the relief of unemployed citizens in the state. An Unemployment Relief Commission and an Emergency Public Works Commission were organized and bond issues were approved for relief loans. Following the inauguration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt March 4, 1933, many Federal bureaus were established under the "new deal," charged with the administration of huge sums of money to provide employment for many classes of people, in accordance with their needs and abilities. Over 60 Federal bureaus and agencies maintained branch offices in Rhode Island or were operative through state departments.¹ The Public Works Administration furnished a portion of the necessary funds and cooperated with the state in the preparation of plans for various projects including highway, bridge and building construction.² The Works Progress Administration provided work of all kinds for persons on unemployment relief, through projects sponsored by public agencies; its activities covered a wide range from the digging of trenches to the writing and publication of a state guide book under the Writers' Project.³ The Historic American Buildings Survey furnished work for unemployed architects and draughtsmen in taking measurements and making drawings of old houses and other buildings of architectural and historic interest.⁴ The Federal Housing Corporation encouraged private housing enterprises by means of insured mortgages and established certain standards of building construction. The National Planning Board stimulated planning activities, nationwide in scope, through the organization of regional and state planning boards and the assignment of planning consultants to local agencies.⁵ Pursuant to its offer of assistance and cooperation Governor Theodore Francis Green (1933-37) appointed a State Planning Board in December, 1934, coordinated with the National and New England Regional planning boards.

The State Planning Board was put on a continuing basis under an act of the General

1. National Emergency Council, *Directory of Federal and State Departments and Agencies in Rhode Island*, 1938.

2. After four years of operation William J. Maguire, state director of Public Works, reported the completion of 92 major projects in the state at a cost of 20 million dollars, about two-thirds of which amount was financed by the state and the remainder by the Federal Government. Among the projects were new buildings at the State Institutions in Cranston, the State Sanatorium at Wallum Lake and Rhode Island College at Kingston, 33 schoolhouses, improvements at the State Airport, and the repair and reconstruction of many miles of streets. — *Providence Journal*, June 13, 1937.

3. American Guide Series, *Rhode Island, A Guide to the Smallest State* (Boston, 1937).

4. Philip D. Creer was state director of the survey. A *Catalogue of Measured Drawings and Photographs of the Survey in the Library of Congress*, compiled and edited by the Historic American Buildings Survey, 1941, lists 144 historic buildings in Rhode Island, 31 of which were measured and drawn under the project.

5. The board was later identified, successively, as the National Resources Board, National Resources Committee, and National Resources Planning Board. Cady was assigned as consultant to the Rhode Island State Planning Board and served until 1938. He was succeeded by Justin R. Herzog, 1938-40.

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Assembly, approved March 21, 1935, creating a board of nine members as a division of the state Executive Department⁶ with John Nicholas Brown as chairman. Headquarters were established in the former Elmwood Avenue schoolhouse at 520 Potter's Avenue and a staff was organized, comprising a few technicians, employed by the state, and about 30 draughtsmen, statisticians and clerks furnished by the Works Progress Administration. The board's early activities were confined, principally, to the assembly of basic data and the preparation of maps.⁷ Clarence R. Bitting succeeded Mr. Brown as chairman in 1938. In the following year the powers and duties of the board were expanded by the General Assembly⁸ and its activities coordinated with the Rhode Island Industrial Rehabilitation Commission, with offices in the State Office Building. Under the subsequent chairmanship of Robert F. Shepard the board undertook studies of traffic control, highway circulation, water pollution abatement, flood control, airports and other problems.

The decade of the 1930s marked the commencement of commercial aviation in Rhode Island. A State Airport Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1929 under whose direction a 411-acre tract at Hillsgrove, seven miles south of Providence, was purchased as a site for Rhode Island State Airport, later named Theodore Francis Green Airport in honor of Rhode Island's governor and senator. Scheduled passenger and air-mail service was inaugurated by American Airways, Inc. in 1932, but was suspended the following year pending construction of cement runways, grading and drainage work, erection of an administration building and hangars, and the establishment of lighting and signal systems. Service was resumed May 30, 1936.⁹

The city increased the area of its Field's Point estate, by additional purchases, to a total of about 175 acres (see map, page 220). The chemical precipitation plant was rebuilt in 1931 and converted into a mechanically-operated sludge process plant; the Ernest Street pumping station was enlarged, and a new pumping station was erected for the Washington Park district. An incinerator was built in 1936 to supplement the plant on Kinsley Avenue (page 240). Facilities at the municipal wharf were improved by the construction of a steel shed and a traveling crane, in 1925-26, and a concrete office building in 1936, the latter erected by Federal aid under a Works Progress Administration project. The quay wall was extended 1300 feet southerly along the harbor line between 1938 and 1941.

Shipping facilities in the port of Providence were advanced by dredging operations undertaken by the United States Engineers in 1938. The ship channel was deepened to 35 feet at mean low water, from Fox Point to Narragansett bay, with a minimum width of 600 feet which was increased to 1700 feet in the harbor. Shipping at this time was confined principally to oil tankers and freighters. The Luckenbach line made regular sailings from the Pacific coast to the municipal wharf, with shipments of lumber and merchandise. At the State Pier coal shipments were received from Wales, Russia and domestic ports, and lumber from the Pacific coast, the Great Lakes and Canada. Towing service was maintained by the Providence Tow and Steamboat Company (established 1881), with a base for its fleet at a wharf opposite the end of Crary Street. The Providence Line to New York, a

6. P.L., 1935, chapter 2198. The Executive Department was one of eleven departments created in 1935 under a state administrative reorganization. A provision of the act required the submission of every project of major importance to the State Planning Board for a recommendation thereon.

7. R. I. State Planning Board, *First Annual Report*, 1935.

8. P.L., 1939, chapter 660. The State Planning Board was discontinued in 1947, and its functions later were absorbed by the R. I. Development Council, created in 1951.

9. Under the state administrative reorganization in 1935 the airport was controlled by the Division of State Airports of the Department of Public Works.

subsidiary of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, ended its career when the *City of Lowell* made its last scheduled sailing from Providence in May, 1937. The Fall River Line closed two months later. Two of the most famous Fall River boats, the *Priscilla* (1894) and *Providence* (1904) were moored at the Fox Point dock at different periods and were opened to visitors before making their final trips to the junk yards. The only passenger lines continuing to operate out of Providence in 1940 were the Colonial Line to New York and a steamer to Block Island.

The reconstruction program carried out in the vicinity of Market Square (pages 238-240) prompted the City Plan Commission to retain the services of Frederick L. Ackerman of New York as consultant, to study possibilities for the future development of the Crawford-Market-Memorial Square area. In his report, submitted to the commission December 15, 1931,¹⁰ Ackerman recommended certain highway changes, including a revision of the lines of College Street (page 240), the elimination of wedge-shaped traffic ways and large unused areas of pavement, and the substitution of definite traffic lanes throughout the problem area. Certain features were suggested for the development of Memorial Square, including its extension northerly to the railroad viaduct, the screening of the viaduct with an architectural facing, the creation of a landscaped area to provide a setting for the war memorial, and the allocation of a site, flanking the Federal Building on the north, for a future public building (page 261). Two alternate plans were proposed for the land in front of the Court House, between South Main and South Water streets, one providing for a park treatment and the other for two small public buildings opposite the wings of the Court House.¹¹

The proposed revision of the lines of College Street (pages 240, 259) was stimulated by a gift from the state to the city, April 21, 1931 of a triangular strip of land extending 165 feet on College Street and 35 feet on South Main Street, for highway purposes. The City Plan Commission, in cooperation with Commissioner of Public Works Frank E. Waterman and the Court House Commission, entered into negotiation with the Rhode Island School of Design, owner of the property on the north side of College Street, for a transfer of land whereby the school would deed to the city a triangular strip at the Benefit Street end and would receive in exchange a similar strip at the North Main Street end, as proposed by Ackerman, at such time as a new building might be erected by the school. The exchange was consummated in 1936 when the Helen Adelia Rowe Metcalf Building was erected in replacement of the old structures on the hillside. Those structures had undergone little change in nearly a century. At the foot of the hill were the Franklin House (1823) and the Pardon Brown house (before 1800), joined by a unit supported on wood lintels beneath which a gangway led to a cobbled court yard (page 89). Abutting the Brown house on the east was President Manning's house (1770), removed to that location from the Brown campus in 1840. On the corner of Benefit Street stood a late 18th century house built by Samuel Westcott, and between it and the Manning house was a three-story building erected soon after 1840 (illustration, page 236).

In the construction of the Metcalf Building (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects, illustration, page 284) Franklin House, considerably altered, was preserved and the hillside units were designed to conform to the early 19th century style of which it served as a motive. The building, which was dedicated June 9, 1937, provided quarters for the school's administrative offices, library, and various departments.

10. City Plan Commission, *18th Annual Report*, 1931.

11. The city previously had designated its portion of the area as a site for a hall of records, but later dedicated it as a memorial park. See page 240 and illustrations pages 258, 284.



From *Annual Report of City Plan Commission, 1931*

Providence County Court House, showing park treatment of west approach as proposed in 1931. Drawing by Jackson, Robertson & Adams and Frederick L. Ackerman.

College Street was reconstructed in 1937 from North Main Street to Benefit, to a width of 60 feet, with a slight curve near its easterly end; and due to advance planning and cooperation, the city was able to add 12 feet to the width of that heavily traveled street at no expense for land taken. The new highway lines were extended westerly to Market Square and the former section of College Street, between South Main and South Water, was transferred to the Market House estate (see map, page 144). Pending a more permanent development that area, and the land in front of the Court House, were sown to grass.¹²

The section of the old Neck road, between Blackstone Boulevard and the Pawtucket line, was abandoned as a public highway by action of the Board of Aldermen March 16, 1933. It reverted to Swan Point Cemetery and Butler Hospital, abutting owners, and upon the relinquishing of the hospital's rights became the sole property of the cemetery corporation. It was reconstructed as a cemetery avenue, identified as the Old Road, and a gate was set up at each end. A portion of the cemetery property, west of Blackstone Boulevard (page 149), had been developed by erection of a greenhouse (1917), a superintendent's house (Clarke and Howe, architects, 1923), and a service building and housing group (Cady, architect, 1933). In November, 1933, Swan Point Cemetery donated two parcels of land in that area to the city, one providing for an extension of Lorimer Avenue to Blackstone Boulevard and the other, comprising six acres at the junction of the boulevard and Hope Street, conveyed for park purposes.

That conveyance of land by Swan Point Cemetery and a gift of the spring site¹³ on North Main Street by Judge J. Jerome Hahn were the only additions to the park system in the thirties. The spring, where the town was planted in 1636, for many years had been concealed in the cellar of a building at the corner of North Main Street and Alamo Lane. The property was purchased by Judge Hahn in 1930 and given by him to the city in memory of his father, Isaac Hahn, the first citizen of Jewish faith to be elected to office by the voters of Providence. A wall, steps and well curb (Norman M. Isham, architect) were erected in 1933 and an evergreen garden was laid out by the park department. It was designated Roger Williams Spring Site. The Blackstone Boulevard estate was developed in 1938 under direction of Martin F. Noonan who succeeded Thomas as superintendent of parks in 1935, and was named Alexander Farnum Lippitt Memorial Park in honor of a World War I victim. The area was landscaped, tennis courts were constructed, and in 1940 a fountain (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects) was erected in memory of Henry B. Anthony, United States Senator from Rhode Island, 1859-84, with funds provided in a bequest to the city under his will.

Considerable progress was made during this period in the development of playground areas by the layout of ball fields, tennis courts, wading pools and skating rinks and the erection of field houses, concrete bleachers and playground apparatus. Facilities at Triggs Park (page 241) were improved by the construction of a club house and a caddy house. In 1935 work was commenced in the development of Fort Independence (page 222), including the erection of retaining walls and steps leading to "ramparts" at the summit, where cannon, received from the War Department, were set up. Flag-raising ceremonies were held July 4, 1938. The park was abandoned in 1942 (page 278).

The public recreational areas, in 1940, comprised 27 parks (seven of which included

12. These areas were landscaped in 1951. See page 283.

13. See page 3. By a reservation in a deed from the Proprietors in 1721 the spring was made available to the townspeople forever.

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playground facilities), two parkways, a municipal golf course, and 47 playgrounds,¹⁴ with a total area of about 1,150 acres. The Civic Improvement and Park Association,¹⁵ which had initiated a movement for extending the system of parks and playgrounds, engaged the services of L. H. Weir of Columbia University for a study of existing facilities. His report showed that the total acreage of parks and playgrounds was less than one-half required to conform to the standard of one acre of recreational land for every 100 persons.¹⁶

The city maintained public comfort stations on Exchange Place (page 217), Weybosset Street (1913), Olneyville Square (1927), Davis Park, and America Street. Public bath houses were located at Tockwotton, Hopkins and Franklin parks and on Blackstone Street, Manton Avenue, Pocasset Avenue and Quaid Street. Swimming pools were operated by the Providence Boys' Club at its South Main Street headquarters and its Olneyville branch.

Under the state reorganization act of 1935¹⁷ the Metropolitan Park Commission (page 223) became absorbed by the Division of Forests, Parks and Parkway of the Department of Agriculture and Conservation. In its final report for the year 1934 the commission listed 34 state parks, reservations and monuments under its jurisdiction, located in 13 cities and towns, with a total area of 4,330 acres. The parks and reservations provided facilities for baseball, tennis, golf, cricket, skating, bathing and other sports and included 2,700 acres of forest land in which a number of wild-life sanctuaries were maintained. Many picnic areas were provided and equipped with stone fireplaces. The historic sites included the Stephen Hopkins house (pages 30, 239) in Providence, the Indian Burial Ground and the General Stanton monument in Charlestown, the Bull Garrison site and the Great Swamp Fight site in South Kingstown, and Queen's Fort in Exeter. The commission had control of eight miles of parkways besides drives, bridle trails and foot paths.¹⁸ After control had been vested in the Division of Forests, Parks and Parkway additions were made to certain of the estates and eight new reservations were acquired, increasing the aggregate area of state park land to 8,577 acres.¹⁹

Passenger traffic over the United Electric Railway system declined over 30 percent between 1926 and 1936.²⁰ The company commenced, in 1935, the operation of trackless trolleys on certain of its street car lines, and by 1940 it continued to use only about one-half its former system of tracks (page 217). Of the routes in operation that year 14 were railway lines, 18 were bus lines, and 10 were trackless trolleys. The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad curtailed its schedules during this period and closed a number of its branch lines, including the Providence, Warren and Bristol in 1937.

By act of the General Assembly, in 1931, a Board of Public Safety for the city of Providence was created, consisting of three commissioners appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate²¹ in which were vested the functions of the former police and fire commissions. The board appointed Edward J. Kelly chief of police, Frank

14. The playgrounds included 28 under jurisdiction of the Board of Park Commissioners, 13 school playgrounds, and 6 state reservations.

15. The association succeeded the League of Improvement Societies (page 213) in 1922.

16. Civic Improvement and Park Association, *Report of a Study of Public Recreation in the City of Providence, R. I.* by L. H. Weir, Director, Park-Recreation Service, National Recreational Association (Providence, 1935); State Planning Board, *Second Annual Report, Recreation in Rhode Island*, 1936.

17. P.L., 1935, chapter 2198.

18. Metropolitan Park Commission, *Annual Report*, 1934.

19. Department of Agriculture and Conservation, *Annual Report*, 1941.

20. Report of the United Electric Railway Company, 1936.

21. The commissioners appointed were George T. Marsh, Michael H. Corrigan and Benjamin P. Moulton, the latter succeeded in 1932 by Everette St. J. Chaffee, former superintendent of state police.

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Charlesworth chief of the fire department, and Ralph W. Eaton (public service engineer since 1915) traffic engineer. Through a reorganization effected in 1933 certain police precincts were combined and the total number reduced from eight to six.²² In addition to the uniformed force and the detective department two new units were established in 1934, namely, a bureau of criminal investigation and a central bureau of records. The Board of Public Safety was superseded June 18, 1935, by a Bureau of Police and Fire,²³ the members of which were appointed by the mayor with the advice and consent of the Board of Aldermen. In that year a police teletype system was put in operation by state and city police and cruising cars were equipped with short-wave radios for receipt of instructions.

The Central Fire Station (page 200) on Exchange Place, together with adjacent water areas, was sold to the Federal Government for the sum of \$200,000 as a site for a Federal Building Annex, by resolution of the City Council, signed by Mayor James E. Dunne (1927-39) April 23, 1935.²⁴ In 1936 the school department, which had maintained head-



Federal Building Annex, 1940, Exchange Place

quarters in the third story of the building, removed to the Technical High School (page 192) and the fire department took up temporary quarters in the old Richmond Street fire station. The Central Fire Station was razed in 1938, in which year the city purchased the former LaSalle Academy property (page 152) on LaSalle Square as a site for a combined police and fire station, identified as the Bureau of Police and Fire Building. Plans were

22. The precinct stations in operation were the Central Station on Fountain Street (page 184), Chad Brown Street (page 245), Sessions Street (page 217), Hamilton Street (page 203), Plain Street (page 166), and Chaffee Street (page 184).

23. P.L., 1935, chapter 2275. The members first appointed were Thomas H. Roberts, Benjamin P. Moulton and Joseph C. Scuncio.

24. Proposals were invited by the United States Treasury Department, in 1932, for the sale or donation of land, convenient to the railroad, on which to erect a parcel post office. Following rejection of the sites submitted the City Plan Commission proposed the site occupied in part by the fire station, as laid out in the Ackerman plan for the development of Memorial Square (page 257).

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drawn in the office of the Commissioner of Public Buildings and the building was completed and occupied in 1940. The former Central Police Station on Fountain Street (page 184) was then vacated by the police department and later became headquarters for the department of public welfare and other municipal agencies.

In 1939 the police department included a personnel of 488 men and the fire department 467 men. The fire-fighting equipment included 28 pumpers, 16 ladder trucks, a water tower and a salvage wagon. The activities of the fire department were extended to include periodic inspections of cellars with authority to cause the removal of accumulated rubbish.

The Federal Building Annex (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects), erected on the site of the fire station, was opened June 12, 1940. In design it is modernized Federal style with simple Greek ornamentation (illustration, page 261). Part of the building was built over the river on piers, thereby concealing from view all but a small part of the remaining water area under Memorial Square. A tunnel connects the new building with the Federal Building and an elevated covered passage leads to the railroad viaduct.

Several highway projects were carried out in Providence by the state under a Federal aid program sponsored by the Public Works Administration. The lines of Reservoir Avenue were revised between Elmwood Avenue and Downing Street in 1936, including the erection of a concrete and steel bridge, 68 feet wide, overpassing the railroad between the former Reservoir Avenue and Adelaide Avenue bridges (page 237), both of which were then discontinued. Elmwood Avenue was reconstructed, eliminating all traces of its boulevard status (page 177) by the removal of car tracks, trees and planting strips, and providing a 54-foot asphalt roadway. Allen's Avenue and a portion of Smith Street were re-paved with asphalt.

Various means for the control of highway traffic were put in operation under city ordinances. These included an extension of one-way streets, the designation of certain areas for rotary traffic, the establishment of boulevard stops, the limitation of speed to 25 miles per hour, and restrictions imposed for curb parking.²⁵ Under direction of Traffic Engineer Eaton signal lights were set up at important highway intersections.

A steel and concrete viaduct was constructed as a Public Works Administration project in 1940, designed by Eaton as a by-pass to relieve traffic congestion at the intersection of Point and Eddy streets. It is a 20-foot wide one-way traffic lane, supported on pylons, starting at a ramp 100 feet west of Point Street Bridge, curving southerly into Eddy Street, and ramping down-grade to Allen's Avenue. Portions of property bordering Point and Eddy streets were condemned for the project. By City Council resolution the viaduct was designated Major General Clarence R. Edwards Viaduct in honor of the World War I commander of the 26th Division, A.E.F.

Under a provision of the building laws as adopted in 1927 (page 234), authorizing the repair or removal of buildings found to be unsafe, 190 structures were rehabilitated and 731 were razed between 1932 and 1940 by direction of Inspector of Buildings Alexander Addeo.²⁶ As many of those buildings were vacant their owners were quite willing to tear them down to save taxes. Most of the areas so cleared in the business section were converted into parking lots. The first off-street parking space was provided by resolution of the City Council February 14, 1920, permitting the use of the Public Garden area (page 203) for

25. Parking meters were installed at certain locations in the business area in February, 1937, but were removed two years later by order of the Superior Court which held that the city had no right to collect parking fees. Use of the meters was sanctioned by authority of the General Assembly in 1947 in which year they were re-installed.

26. *Providence Journal*, July 21, 1940.

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that purpose, and the first private parking lot was opened on Friendship Street in 1924. By the year 1940 there were 64 parking lots in operation for profit within a radius of 2,000 feet from City Hall, covering more than 24 acres of land and accommodating 6000 automobiles.

The population of Providence, which had increased steadily up to 1930, remained practically stationary between that year and 1940.²⁷ The causes, retarding its growth, included a decline in birth rate, curtailing of immigration in the United States, lack of opportunity for employment, and a migration of city workers to houses in the suburbs.²⁸ The birth-rate factor was reflected in public school enrollment which showed a sharp decrease in attendance at elementary schools, no change in junior high schools, and an increase in senior high schools.²⁹

New schoolhouses, built between 1929 and 1938, included one elementary school, five junior high schools and two senior high schools, all designed in the office of the Commissioner of Public Buildings. The Windmill Street Elementary School (1933), erected in the



Oliver Hazard Perry Junior High School, 1930, 370 Hartford Avenue.

North End near Charles Street, is modern in design with a central unit and two wings. For reasons of economy cast stone was used as trimming for the brick walls, and defects in that material made it necessary to reconstruct the building in 1940. The junior high schools included Nathan Bishop School (1929) on Sessions Street, Oliver Hazard Perry School (1930, illustration above) at 370 Hartford Avenue, Nathanael Greene School (1930) at 721 Chalkstone Avenue, Gilbert Stuart School (1931) at 160 Bucklin Street, and Roger Williams School (1932) at 278 Thurbers Avenue. They are similar in plan, each having an assembly room with stage, two gymnasiums, and from 31 to 42 class rooms. Hope High

27. According to the United States Census the population of Providence was 252,981 in 1930 and 253,504 in 1940, a gain of only 523.

28. Largely as a result of the migration the combined populations of North Providence, Johnston, Cranston and East Providence increased by over nine percent between 1930 and 1940.

29. The annual report of the School Committee for 1938-39 showed a decrease in the total school enrollment from 44,620 in 1930 to 42,635 in 1939; this was further decreased to 31,713 in 1946. Alexander J. Stoddard was school superintendent, 1929-37, and was succeeded by James L. Hanley.

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School (1938) was built on a portion of the abandoned Hope Reservoir site (page 135) to replace the former Hope Street High School (page 192) erected on the opposite side of Hope Street 40 years earlier. It is a four-story building of brick and limestone, containing a large assembly hall, gymnasiums, offices, and class rooms for 2000 pupils. The remainder of the reservoir site was reserved for an athletic field. Mount Pleasant High School (1938) was built in the northwest section of the city (page 219) with facilities similar to those of Hope High School and rooms for 2,400 pupils (illustration below). School properties in active use, in 1940, included four senior high schools with three annexes, eight junior high schools, 66 elementary schools, and a trade school, besides 46 special schools located, for the most part, in class rooms of regular schools.

Dr. Clarence M. Barbour, who followed Dr. Faunce as president of Brown, died January 17, 1937 and was succeeded by Dr. Henry M. Wriston. In 1938 the Metcalf Research Laboratory (Day and Klauder, architects) was erected on the Back Campus,



Mount Pleasant High School, 1938, Mount Pleasant Avenue.

the gift of Senator Jesse H. Metcalf. The campus fence was extended easterly along George Street in 1940, including a memorial gateway (Albert Harkness, architect) given by Psi Upsilon Fraternity and dedicated June 22. University Hall was reconditioned in 1939-40³⁰ through the generosity of an anonymous friend of Brown; architects Perry, Shaw and Hepburn of Boston effected a restoration of the exterior to a condition approximating its early status and remodeled the interior for administrative purposes, with a degree of

30. See page 44. This was the fifth major reconstruction project of the college edifice since its erection in 1770. It was repaired and rehabilitated in 1782 following its occupancy by troops in the Revolutionary War. In 1834 its exterior walls were covered with stucco, new windows were installed, the roof balustrade was removed, and a new bell (still in use) was hung in the cupola. Alterations in 1883 included new stairways, a new roof, new large-paned window sash, new chimneys and a heating plant. The exterior was restored in 1905, with funds donated by Marsden J. Perry, by removing the stucco and installing new small-paned windows.

elegance characteristic of that firm's restorations at Williamsburg, Virginia. The building was re-dedicated May 4, 1940. The former Administration Building (page 205) was re-named Van Wickle Hall and was turned over to the Department of English.

Aquinas Hall (Oresto DiSaia, architect) was erected at Providence College, east of Harkins Hall (page 225) in 1939. It is a dormitory with end wings, somewhat modern in design with buttressed walls, large window areas, and a center entrance tower.

Rhode Island School of Design acquired, by gift of Stephen O. Metcalf in December, 1938, the block bounded by Market Square, Canal, Drowne and North Main streets as a site for an auditorium. The buildings standing on the block were of interest architecturally but were partly vacant and shabby in appearance. Fronting on Market Square were Granite Block and two of the few remaining buildings of the brownstone era (illustration, page 133). Cook's Block was on North Main Street and Central Hotel³¹ had until recently stood on Canal Street. The site was cleared in 1939 and the Auditorium was constructed the following year from plans by Philip D. Creer, instructor in architecture at the school. While the interior is modern in lighting, sound, decorative design and stage technique, the outside was designed to harmonize with the Market House and the new buildings on College Hill (illustration, page 254).

Jacob Conn, operator of a neighborhood theatre in Olneyville, erected the Metropolitan Theatre (Oresto DiSaia, architect) on Chestnut Street in 1932, intended primarily for motion pictures but equipped with a standard stage. It was not a financial success and after a few weeks of operation its regular productions were terminated. Its owner's loss proved, however, to be a benefit to the music-loving public for, under a new management, the theatre became available for a greatly needed concert auditorium (page 249), seating over 3,000 persons. Commencing in the fall of 1933 it was used for performances of the Boston Symphony Orchestra,³² the Providence Community Concerts Association, and other dramatic and musical entertainments.

The construction of business buildings in the downtown area suffered a recession following the active decade of the 1920s; in fact, the aggregate of new structures was greatly overshadowed by the extensive demolition of buildings to provide parking lots. The chief project was the Providence Journal Building on Fountain Street (Albert Kahn, Incorporated, of Detroit, Michigan, architects) to which the newspaper was moved from its Westminster Street building (page 207) in 1934. There was a decentralizing trend in business toward the radial arteries and such neighborhood centers as Wayland Square, Olneyville Square and the Thayer Street area where new blocks of shops were erected. Modern materials and methods of construction were employed in many of these buildings, including veneerings of tile, porcelain enamel and panelboard for wall surfaces, structural glass partitions, and an extensive use of plate glass with trimmings of bronze, aluminum and stainless steel. The Medical Arts Building at Thayer and Waterman streets (B.S.D. Martin, architect, illustration, page 266) has an all-glass first story and continuous steel casements set in the limestone second story; and the First National Store on Hope Street, near Rochambeau Avenue, has a facade of black structural glass, pierced by first and second story windows that curve around the corners. The modern technique was employed, likewise, in the reconstruction of store fronts on Westminster and Weybosset streets and in

31. A six-story building erected by Henry B. Drowne in 1848 for business purposes, later converted into a hotel.

32. Since leaving Infantry Hall in 1926 the Boston Symphony Orchestra had played five seasons in the Albee Theatre and two in Loew's State Theatre.

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the design of automobile service stations, restaurants and cocktail bars.³³ Among the industrial buildings erected during this period were the Coca-Cola Bottling Company (1939) at 95 Pleasant Valley Parkway, a brick building of modern design with a grouping of windows in panels, and the California Artificial Flower Company (Albert Harkness, architect, 1939) at 400 Reservoir Avenue, a white brick building with three stories of continuous casements and a high octagonal tower (illustration, page 267).

In domestic architecture the trend reflected a transition toward modern technique. On the more conservative side is the Rice house (Albert Harkness, architect, 1932, illustration, page 271) at 25 Cooke Street with its high parapet partly concealing a hipped-roof. A dwelling at the corner of Taber and Hazard avenues (Philip Franklin Eddy, architect, 1935) has wings facing the two streets with a curved entrance tower in the center. A small house at 29 Manning Street has brick walls coated with white cement paint, a narrow cornice and metal casements (J. Peter Geddes, architect and owner, 1938). A flat-roofed stucco house overlooking Seekonk river at 323 Laurel Avenue (Barker and Turoff, architects, 1940), is modern in design (illustration, page 268).



Medical Arts Building, 1938, corner of Waterman and Thayer streets.

Governor Green issued a proclamation January 1, 1936, designating that year Rhode Island's Tercentenary. Plans for a commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the settlement at Providence had been made by three independent agencies, namely, the Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Tercentenary Committee, Incorporated,³⁴ the Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission,³⁵ and the Providence Tercentenary Committee.³⁶

33. Following the repeal of the prohibition amendment (page 231) December 12, 1933, cocktail bars and lounges became an important feature of hotels and restaurants.

34. Established under auspices of the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1930, incorporated 1931, and later reorganized with officers including Ira Lloyd Letts, chairman, Arthur L. Philbrick, vice chairman and treasurer, and Mrs. Frank M. Adams, secretary.

35. Created by act of the General Assembly, approved May 31, 1935, and composed of Very Reverend Lorenzo C. McCarthy, chairman, Frank E. Ballou, vice chairman, John Nicholas Brown, Judge Letts, Alfred G. Chaffee, Joseph P. Dunn, James H. Kiernan, and Horace G. Belcher, executive secretary.

36. Created by the City Council in 1935, including a representative of the council from each of the 13 wards, with David A. Dorgan, chairman.

The most spectacular event of the year took place May 4 with a re-enactment of Rhode Island's declaration of independence in the Colony House on Benefit Street, arranged by the Society of Colonial Dames in Rhode Island and the Providence Tercentenary Committee. This was immediately followed by exercises at the State House, conducted by the Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission, at which Governor James H. Curley of Massachusetts presented to Governor Green of Rhode Island the Act of the Massachusetts General Court rescinding the decree of banishment imposed by the court October 9, 1635 upon Roger Williams (page 1).

The Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission arranged for the issue on May 4 of a three-cent tercentenary postage stamp, designed by the Federal Bureau of Engraving and Printing, with a reproduction of the statue of Roger Williams at Roger Williams Park (page 148). It published several historical books and maps, sponsored a series of lectures, and showed a motion picture film, entitled "Colonial Rhode Island," prepared under direction of Mrs. Alice Collins Gleeson. It sponsored the erection of rustic highway portals where main roads entered the state, as well as log-cabin information booths at strategic



California Artificial Flower Company, 1939, 400 Reservoir Avenue.

locations on the principal highways.³⁷ It erected 120 cement and aluminum markers at town lines on which were inscribed the respective town arms and a few lines of history. It conducted exercises at the State House on Italian Day, October 11, at which time a tablet was presented by Luigi Scala, commemorating the visit of Giovanni da Verrazzano to Narragansett bay in 1524.³⁸

The Providence Tercentenary Committee erected a "Colonial House" on City Hall Park which served as its headquarters. It put up a metal statue of Roger Williams on Exchange Place Mall with a plaque on which were recorded the highlights of his career.³⁹

37. The portals and booths were designed by the State Planning Board and erected by the Civilian Conservation Corps; the booths were serviced by men furnished by the Works Progress Administration.

38. Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission, *Rhode Island Tercentenary, 1636-1936*, p. 118 (Providence, 1937).

39. The statement on the plaque that Williams was "born in Wales, England, 1603," caused both protest and ridicule for the double error; it is a matter of record that his birthplace was London (page 1), and that Wales is not a part of England. The statue was removed at the close of the tercentenary year.

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It arranged for the unveiling of a statue at Roger Williams Park entitled "The Pioneers;" and it sponsored a number of entertainments.

Among the activities of the Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Tercentenary Committee were the issuance, March 5, of a commemorative half-dollar, designed by John Howard Benson and Arthur Graham Carey and authorized by Act of Congress in 1935; the publication and distribution of a pictorial historical map of Rhode Island, drawn by William A. Perry under direction of the State Planning Board; the reprinting of *A Key into the Language of America* by Roger Williams, first published in London in 1643; the conduct of an industrial exposition in the State Armory September 11 to 19; and the purchase of the site in East Providence where Roger Williams made his first settlement after his banishment from Salem,⁴⁰ which was dedicated November 8 as a public park. Finally, as a monument in perpetuity, the committee sponsored the project of the Roger Williams Memorial Association to erect a monument to Williams on Prospect Terrace.⁴¹

The memorial had its inception in 1850 when the Providence Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers raised the sum of \$100 which was deposited in a Providence bank as a



323 Laurel Avenue, 1940.

nucleus to a monument fund. In 1860 the Roger Williams Memorial Association was organized and accumulated a small fund. In 1865 Stephen Randall, a direct descendant of Roger Williams, deposited \$1,000 in the Peoples Savings Bank and executed a deed of gift for the erection of a monument to be erected on Prospect Terrace. No further action was taken until 1934, when the General Assembly incorporated a new Roger Williams Memorial Association with authority to erect a monument to the founder of the state.⁴² In the summer of 1936 the association's executive board conducted a competition, with F. Ellis Jackson as architectural advisor, resulting in the selection of the design submitted by Ralph W. Walker of New York.

40. See page 3. The surroundings were landscaped by the East Providence Tercentenary Committee.

41. Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Tercentenary Commission, Inc., *Commemorating Three Hundred Years* (Providence, 1936).

42. The association organized with an executive board consisting of Addison P. Munroe, president, John Nicholas Brown, vice president, Albert A. Baker, secretary, Arthur L. Philbrick, treasurer, Howard M. Chapin, Elizabeth A. Moulton, John W. Haley, and Winfield S. Solomon.

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The memorial was erected above the retaining wall of Prospect Terrace, commanding an extensive view of the west side of the city. It consists of a statue of Roger Williams (Leo Friedlander of New York, sculptor) 14 feet high, standing upon a projecting pedestal and framed by a colossal portal (illustration below). Dedicatory exercises were held June 29, 1939. The presence of a delegation of Narragansett Indians in traditional costume, men in Colonial military uniform, and a squad of the First Light Infantry Regiment provided a colorful spectacle. The statue was unveiled by Mrs. William C. Schuster, a descendant of Williams, and the remains of the founder of the colony, enclosed in a steel casket, were placed for permanent enshrinement in a recess of the monument.⁴³

In 1938 the Market House (page 48) was condemned as unsafe by the commissioner of public buildings and its tenants, including the Providence Chamber of Commerce, were ordered to evacuate.⁴⁴ The work of reconstructing and modernizing the building was under-



Roger Williams Memorial, 1939, Prospect Terrace.

taken that year as a Works Progress Administration project under sponsorship of the Public Buildings Department. This involved the demolition of the upper part of the walls and the roof, the rebuilding of the walls and floors, and the construction of a steel trussed roof.⁴⁵ In response to a recommendation by the Rhode Island Chapter of the American

43. Roger Williams died in 1683 and was buried in a grave in the rear of his home lot on the Towne street, later the Dorr estate on Benefit Street. The grave was opened in 1860 and the remains transferred to a tomb at North Burial Ground.

44. The chamber established new offices at 162 Westminster Street and later removed to 36 Exchange Place.

45. Whether the Market House was as unsound structurally as alleged is a matter of conjecture. It is interesting to note that the roof was in process of demolition, and the condemned oak rafters partly exposed, when the 1938 hurricane struck Providence; yet in spite of its vulnerable condition the building withstood the storm.

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Institute of Architects Mayor John F. Collins (1939-41) suspended building operations soon after his inauguration in January, 1939, and ordered the preparation of revised plans to provide for a more authentic restoration of the building. Plans were redrawn by City Architect B. G. V. Zetterstrom with members of the Chapter acting as consultants. Work was resumed in the summer of 1939 and the exterior was substantially completed a year later.⁴⁶ Certain interior partitions and stairways were erected in 1941, after which work was again suspended, and the building remained idle until 1950 (page 276).



From Annual Report of City Plan Commission, 1931

War Memorial (1927), showing facing of railroad viaduct as proposed in 1931. Drawing by Frederick L. Ackerman.

On the afternoon of September 21, 1938, Rhode Island experienced the worst storm in its history when a hurricane of sub-tropical origin struck through the heart of the state, taking a death toll of over 300 persons and causing damage estimated at 100 million dollars. A tidal wave flooded the central area of Providence to a depth of more than 13 feet above mean high water, this being about two feet higher than the flood line of the

46. A bronze tablet was put up on the building with the legend "Restored by Works Progress Administration of Rhode Island, 1939-1940" (removed in 1950).

storm of 1815 (page 81). The business area was under water from North Main Street westerly to Mathewson, with a depth of over six feet above the pavement of lower Westminster Street. Many shops and their contents were ruined, safe deposit vaults suffered great damage, street cars and automobiles were submerged in the streets (illustration, page 82). The wind blew down thousands of trees throughout the city and caused extensive property damage. All power and telephone lines died and the city was without light for several days. Business was at a standstill for a period, and the *Providence Journal* was printed on presses outside the city for over a week. Martial law was established in sections of the city and curfew rules were put in effect. Reconstruction work soon was undertaken and employment was provided for an army of men in the succeeding months in the removal of trees and other clean-up projects.

The electors of Providence, at a special election November 7, 1939, approved a new city charter which was granted by the General Assembly at the January session, 1940 and became operative in 1941.⁴⁷ A movement for charter reform had been agitated for several years by the Charter League which drafted an act that was presented to the assembly in 1939. On May 5 of that year the assembly created a Charter Revision Commission of 11 members with Charles P. Sisson chairman and ex-Mayor Gainer secretary. That commission filed its report with the Board of Canvassers September 30, 1939, embodying a new charter for submission to the voters. Under its provisions the mayor was given increased appointive and administrative powers, and the Board of Aldermen and the Common Council were superseded by a unicameral council of 26 members comprising two representatives elected from each ward. Dennis J. Roberts was inaugurated first mayor of Providence under the new charter in January, 1941.

47. P.L., 1940, chapter 832.



Rice house, 1932, 25 Cooke Street.



Air view of Civic Center, 1951.

CHAPTER 20 1940 - 1950

WORLD War II had its inception in Europe when Germany invaded Poland September 1, 1939. The United States' participation in hostilities commenced with the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese December 7, 1941, and ended with Japan's surrender August 14, 1945. A draft act was adopted by the Congress December 19, 1941, under provisions of which all men from 20 to 44 years of age registered for military duty February 16, 1942, followed four months later by registration of youths from 18 to 20.¹ The principal war bases in Rhode Island were the Naval Operational Base at Newport, the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point, the Naval Construction Training Center at Camp Endicott, Davisville, and the Hillsgrove Army Air Base at the State Airport.

Many Rhode Island men and women joined their comrades from other states in the various branches of the service in America, Europe, Africa, and the Pacific theatre. Others were engaged in phases of war industry. The State Guard was mobilized for state duty December 9, 1941. A State Council of Defense was created by the General Assembly, with branches in cities and towns, under which voluntary civilian groups were organized as airplane spotters, air-raid wardens, and other activities of responsibility. Air-raid alarm drills were held from time to time, with accompanying blackouts. By an army order a dim-out regulation went into effect in May, 1942, to prevent sky-glow at night, and was continued for 18 months. A State Emergency Defense Act gave extraordinary powers to Governor J. Howard McGrath.

A War Production Board was created by the Congress in January, 1942, under direction of which certain structural materials were frozen except for essential work. By that order private building construction was virtually suspended. Another Federal bureau, the Office of Price Administration, organized in May, 1942, established ceiling prices for rentals and certain commodities, and instituted systems of rationing for fuel oil, gasoline, automobiles, tires, and articles of food and clothing. During a period of acute fuel-oil shortage many users of oil for heat were forced to convert to coal; a temperature ceiling of 65 degrees was ordered, and public buildings, schools and business establishments were placed on a five-day-week schedule. The restricted use of automobiles precluded pleasure driving. There were periodic drives for war bonds and stamps, and organized collections of scrap metal and waste paper. Daylight saving time was established on a year-round basis.²

Numerous canteens were established by local institutions, providing refreshment and entertainment for thousands of men in the armed forces visiting Providence. Railroads were jam-packed with service men, watched over by military police, and the passenger station was active at all hours with arriving and departing soldiers and sailors. Navy men, stationed at Newport and Quonset, made frequent visits to Providence by the bus lines.

The Field's Point area was the scene of extensive activity during the war. Under the agency of the Work Projects Administration in 1941 about 35 acres of city-owned property

1. Rhode Island registrations included 84,487 in the first draft and over 2,000 in the second draft.

2. Daylight saving time had been in effect from spring to fall in Providence and other communities since 1920 (page 233). State-wide daylight saving from the last Sunday in April to the last Sunday in September became effective April 24, 1946 and was extended to the last Sunday in October in 1954.

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were reclaimed, by the erection of a dike, extending from the south end of the quay wall (page 219) westerly to the shore at the Providence-Cranston line, and by filling the water area behind it. In March, 1942 the United States Maritime Commission selected the Field's Point waterfront as a site for a shipbuilding plant and awarded to the Rheem Shipbuilding Company the contract for developing the plant and building 32 Liberty ships. The site included 101 acres comprising a section of the filled land, north of the dike, and land and water areas south of the dike in Cranston. Construction work was started immediately, including the filling and grading of the water areas and the erection of piers and buildings.³ The first Liberty ship, the *William Coddington*, was launched November 28, 1942. The shipyard was taken over by the Walsh-Kaiser Company February 28, 1943, and in the ensuing 18 months the remainder of the Liberty ships were constructed in addition to 32 combat-cargo ships. The final launching was the U.S.S. *Zenobia* July 6, 1944.⁴

Large sections of the Field's Point estate, including Fort Independence Park (page 222), were leased in 1942 to the United States Navy and the Army Air Corps. The grading operations which ensued involved the abandonment of a part of New York Avenue and other highways and the leveling of Fort Independence.

The Colonial Line to New York discontinued service in March, 1942, upon the requisitioning of its steamers by the War Shipping Board, thereby terminating all passenger service by water to points outside Rhode Island. Sailings from Providence to Block Island were suspended during the war, to be resumed for a few years, after its close, in the summer months. Year-round service to Block Island was instituted from the state pier at Galilee.

The abandonment of the steamboat lines, and the concentration of shipping in the Allen's Avenue area, left the shores of the upper harbor in a condition of obsolescence. The old wharves north of Point Street Bridge were decaying and the shores were weed-grown.⁵ The south shore of the Neck, from Fox Point easterly to India Point, was a scene of desolation. The only surviving buildings were the abandoned sheds of the New York boats. Near the former Merchants and Miners docks (page 106) ships were being scrapped for salvage of sheet metal. Off Bold Point were the sunken remains of two or three river steamboats. Scores of rotting piles at India Point were sole reminders of trade with the East Indies (page 57).

On the night of September 14, 1944, Rhode Island was swept by another heavy gale. Although less severe than the hurricane of 1938 (page 270) and unaccompanied by loss of life, property damage was serious, particularly along the coast. The sustained wind velocity in Providence reached 43 miles per hour with gusts double that speed. The water was knee-deep in Exchange Place as a result of a rainfall of over five inches and a tidal rise of five feet above mean high tide.⁶

During the war years Brown, like most American universities, added a summer semester to its regular curriculum, and held Commencements three times each year. In addition to its courses for civilian students and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps the university cooperated with the War Department in the instruction of Army Air Force

3. The fabricating shop was destroyed by fire December 31, 1942 and was rebuilt.

4. The shipyard estate was acquired by the Barton Trading Company in 1950 and was known thereafter as Harborside Industrial Park. A portion of the estate became headquarters of United States Army units. A drive-in theatre was opened in another section in 1957.

5. In 1954 the State condemned about 35 acres on both sides of Providence river for incorporation in the freeway project (page 282) to include waterfront highways in replacement of the old steamboat wharves.

6. *Providence Journal Almanac*, 1945, p. 218. Following subsequent hurricanes on August 31 and September 11, 1954, various plans for hurricane protection were considered by Federal, State and City agencies.

1940-1950

enlisted men in pre-meteorology and the drilling of Navy enlisted men under the Naval College Training Program. Military reviews were held periodically on the college green, centering at the flagstaff.⁷ By the fall of 1945 student enrollment had exceeded 5000,⁸ the majority of whom were war veterans. Temporary quarters providing 84 family units for married students were established in reconstructed navy barracks, erected on the Sessions Street playground site⁹ in 1946, adjacent to Marvel Gymnasium and currently known as "Brown Town."

At the close of the war Brown undertook a housing and development program (Perry, Shaw and Hepburn of Boston, architects) which involved an ultimate \$10 million expendi-



Courtesy of Brown Alumni Monthly

Sharpe Refectory, opened January 28, 1951, first completed unit of Wriston Quadrangle, Brown University.

ture. The initial projects were two academic buildings erected in 1946-47. Whitehall, a modern brick-and-glass classroom building, was built adjacent to Marston Hall on Brook

7. The flag pole originally was the mast of an American cup defender, built in the Herreshoff plant in Bristol. It was blown down, its top broken off, in the 1938 hurricane. When it was put back in the following year a base was erected by the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, a gift to the university from residents of the United States whose family origins were in Greece, as a memorial to Samuel Gridley Howe of the class of 1821 in recognition of his services to Greece.

8. Student enrollment had dropped to one-half of that number by 1950.

9. By arrangement with the city of Providence the playground, established in 1929, was shifted temporarily to the stadium parking lot at Elmgrove and Savoy. The barracks subsequently were demolished.

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

Street, with accommodations for 870 students; and Andrews Hall, a Pembroke dormitory with Colonial characteristics, was constructed on Bowen Street to house 240 students of the women's college. The principal project was the construction of a quadrangle, started in 1950, on the two-block site¹⁰ bounded by George, Thayer, Charles Field and Brown streets. This involved the destruction or moving¹¹ of nearly 50 buildings, including Thayer Street School (page 139) which was deeded by the city to the university in exchange for Ames House,¹² a graduate student dormitory at 121 Power Street. The quadrangle, including Sharpe Refectory (illustration, page 275) and eight dormitory and fraternity groups, was designed in a modified Colonial style.¹³

Providence College operated on a year-round basis during the war, reducing the normal four-year program to two and three-quarters calendar years. A unit of the Army Specialized Training Program was established at the college. The principal post-war construction projects were Albertus Magnus Hall, a science building designed by John F. Hogan, and the Grotto of Our Lady of the Rosary, a World War memorial designed by Oliver O. Gauvin, both erected in 1948. A gymnasium was under construction in 1953.

The Rhode Island School of Design became owner of the Market House under a deed of gift signed by Mayor Dennis J. Roberts on behalf of the city May 27, 1948. The building which had been idle since reconstruction activities were suspended in 1940 (page 270), was altered and rehabilitated in 1950 (Cady, architect), providing quarters for the school's division of planning, and was dedicated December 21 of that year.

Bryant College of Business Administration, originally Bryant and Stratton Business College (page 155) operating under private management, was chartered as a non-profit institution by the General Assembly in 1949 under control of a Board of Trustees with Dr. Harry L. Jacobs president. For ten years prior to its incorporation, headquarters had been located at 1 Young Orchard Avenue (formerly Hope Hospital, page 212). Other buildings included Memorial Hall, a newly-constructed auditorium at 75 Charles Field Street, a Placement Bureau at 154 Hope Street (formerly the Taft house, page 188), and several houses in the vicinity used for dormitories.¹⁴

By the middle of the century buses were being used exclusively by the traction lines. In addition to the United Electric Railways Company,¹⁵ operating in the city and its immediate suburbs, several independent lines ran to more distant spots. A bus terminal was erected in 1942 by the New England Transportation Company, at the corner of Eddy

10. A section of Benevolent Street, between Brown and Thayer, was closed by the city June 1, 1949.

11. Seven houses were removed to other locations. Two of these, dating from the early 19th century, were moved from Benevolent Street to the Power and Williams ends of the "Windmill Lot," east of Carrington House (page 64), upon which John Brown built a mill "for the grinding of corn to make gin" after erecting his mansion on Power Street in 1786 (page 63). Four houses were moved to the north side of Power Street and one to the south side of Charles Field Street.

12. Erected c. 1830 by Samuel Ames and deeded to Brown 1937. It was razed by the city to provide a site for the Brook Street fire station (page 278).

13. The quadrangle was completed and dedicated June 1, 1952. It was named Wriston Quadrangle in honor of Dr. Henry M. Wriston who retired that year as president of Brown and was succeeded by Dr. Barnaby C. Keeney. Sharpe Refectory was named for Henry D. Sharpe, Chancellor of the University since 1932 and public benefactor. A second quadrangle, for which eleven houses on Charles Field, Brown and Benevolent streets had been demolished, was completed and occupied in 1957. In September of that year Brown purchased Dexter Asylum (page 92) from the city, for development as an athletic plant.

14. By the year 1955 the college had expanded to include 20 buildings and an athletic field. The most recent acquisition was the former Benevolent Street fire station (page 134), remodeled as a library.

15. Succeeded by the United Transit Co. in 1952.

and Fountain streets, for its patrons and those of the Interstate Bus Corporation, the Greyhound Lines, the Short Line and other companies. The two-story terminal (Barker and Turoff, architects) is of contemporary design and includes ticket offices, baggage and waiting rooms, a restaurant and a lounge.

The last trolley car to operate on rails passed through the east side tunnel May 14, 1948, ending an era that had commenced in 1893 (page 179). Trackless trolleys were abandoned shortly thereafter. The tunnel roadway was reconstructed for the use of buses, including removal of the rails. The tracks on the city streets were removed gradually as highway reconstruction was undertaken.

Development of the State Airport at Hillsgrove (page 256) was continued with the erection of a hangar for the Rhode Island National Guard in 1941-42 and the lengthening of runways. On April 1, 1942 the United States Army Air Force took over the airport on lease from the state and operated it as Hillsgrove Air Base until September 26, 1945. Scheduled airline service was resumed by Eastern Air Lines and Northeast Airways in 1946, United Air Lines in 1948 and Wiggins Airways in 1949. Additional land was acquired in 1949, providing a total of 745 acres for the reservation. New runways were completed in 1950.

For many years sub-standard housing conditions in sections of Providence had been the concern of civic and welfare organizations (page 223). A real property inventory, conducted by the United States Department of Commerce in 1934, disclosed that nearly ten percent of city dwellings were in bad condition and many unfit for habitation. The City Council appointed a special committee on low-cost housing and slum clearance in 1937 to consider cooperation with the state and the Federal Government in construction projects.¹⁶ This led to the creation of a Providence Housing Authority in 1939, under the General Laws of Rhode Island, 1938, with David J. Barry as chairman, which undertook a program of Federal Aid projects to provide homes for World War II veterans. Two initial projects were carried out between 1940 and 1944 with Maximilian Untersee of Brookline, Massachusetts, as consulting architect. The first group, Chad Brown Houses, was built on an unimproved site of 13 acres bounded by Chad Brown, March, Berkshire and June streets; the other group, Roger Williams Houses, was constructed in a low-grade residential area of 29 acres bounded by Thurbers, Prairie and Pavilion avenues and Rugby Street, adjacent to Roger Williams Junior High School.¹⁷ Brick fireproof buildings of two and three stories were erected for the projects, together with central heating plants and the landscaping of grounds with provision for parks, playfields and parking lots.¹⁸

In 1949 the Providence Housing Authority undertook a project for war veterans on a 14-acre tract, identified as Valley View, on the northerly side of Admiral Street near the North Providence line. It was financed by a municipal bond issue without government aid and included 356 units, consisting mostly of four-family houses of frame construction, laid out in quadrangles, with playfields and other community facilities. Creer, Kent, Mather, Cruise and Aldrich were architects.

The recommendations for extending the system of parks and playgrounds, included in

16. An act enabling cities to condemn property for housing purposes was passed by the General Assembly in 1935. Congress passed the Wagner-Steagall Act in 1937, to provide financial assistance to states and political divisions thereof, for the elimination of unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions and for the provision of decent, safe and sanitary dwellings for persons of low income.

17. About 150 structures of poor quality were demolished for the project.

18. Later Federal-aid projects included Admiral Terrace (1951), Coddington Court (1951), Hartford Park (1953) and Manton Heights (1953).

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

the Weir report of 1936 (page 260), backfired. The five-acre Fort Independence Park (page 222), was lost to the city in 1942 when it was taken over by the United States Navy and leveled. In 1945 Mayor Roberts, on behalf of the City Council and with the consent of the General Assembly, gave the 38-acre Davis Park to the Federal Government for the erection of a veterans' hospital (page 279). Those losses in recreational areas were partially offset by two new acquisitions. One of these was a small lot on North Main Street, adjoining the Spring site (page 259), opposite Saint John's Cathedral, given the city in 1942 by descendants of Gabriel Bernon, a French Huguenot who settled in Providence in 1686 and founded King's Church (page 25). The other was the 28-acre estate of the late Senator Jesse H. Metcalf on Woodward Road, identified as Wanskuck Park, a gift to the city by his widow June 10, 1948.

Various improvements were made to the public parks and playgrounds, financed by a \$1 million bond issue authorized in 1946. The principal construction projects were two open-air swimming pools, erected in 1948, each having a building with dressing rooms, located, respectively, on Knight Street (Federal Hill) and Prairie Avenue (South Providence). In 1950 the city maintained a total of 67 public parks and playgrounds with a net area of 944 acres.¹⁹

A department of recreation in Providence, created by act of the General Assembly, became operative in 1947, with the appointment of John P. Cronin as director. Under the act control and management of the city playgrounds was removed from the park department. Recreational centers were established in the vacated East Street School, the Thomas A. Doyle School, and the abandoned Plain Street police station.

The Bureau of Police and Fire (page 261) reduced the number of police precincts from six to three in 1947, with stations located on LaSalle Square (page 262), Chad Brown Street (page 245) and Hamilton Street (page 203).²⁰ In 1950 the police department, under Chief Charles A. Higgins, included a total personnel of 427 men including superior officers, patrolmen and the traffic squad.²¹

Between the years 1948 and 1952 all fire stations ante-dating 1903 were closed to active use and nine modern stations were erected, functional in design, although less picturesque than the bell-towered structures they replaced. Four of the stations, on Broad Street, Allen's Avenue, Messer Street and Hartford Avenue, were designed by Lucio E. Carlone; the others, on Admiral Street, Atwells Avenue, Branch Avenue, Brook Street (illustration, page 279) and North Main Street, were the work of Jackson, Robertson and Adams.²² In 1950 the fire department, under chief Thomas H. Cotter, included a personnel of 471 men, its major equipment composed of 32 pumpers and 18 ladder trucks.

19. *Financial Report of the City of Providence for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1950.* The reduction in park and playground estates continued in the 1950s. Tockwotton Park (page 165) was taken as a site for Fox Point Elementary School. Burnside Square (page 240) and parts of Hayward Park (page 165) and Hopkins Park (page 203) were condemned for highway purposes. A section of Blackstone Park (page 147) was sold for the erection of a radio broadcasting station. And Corliss Park, a state reservation (page 223) was taken as a site for a state vocational school. Additions to the estates included the Whitman Farm on Eaton Street, Fox Point Veterans' Memorial Park on Gano Street, Davis Park Playground on a section of the former Davis Park which was returned to the city by the Federal Government, and a few small neighborhood parks.

20. The Sessions, Wickenden, Plain, Knight and Chaffee stations were vacated. Subsequently the Wickenden station was demolished and the others converted into community centers.

21. The Bureau of Police and Fire was abolished in 1951 and was succeeded by the office of Public Safety Commissioner with James B. Dunn as incumbent. Two years later the police precinct system was discontinued and the department became centralized in the Bureau of Police and Fire Building on LaSalle Square.

22. The North Main Street fire station was erected on the site of the former Quaker Meeting House (page 111).

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

The United States Veterans' Administration took possession of Davis Park (page 185) in 1945, razed the Davis Mansion (page 141) and other buildings on the estate, and started construction of a seven-story hospital designed by the Administration's construction service bureau. It was opened June 6, 1949, under operation of the Federal Government, for the general medical and surgical treatment of war veterans.

The unfinished Masonic Temple (page 249), at the corner of Brownell and Francis streets, was purchased by the state June 1, 1945 with the purpose of altering it into a state office building. Although completion of the main building was deferred, the auditorium wing on Brownell Street was reconstructed in 1949 (Oresto DiSaia, architect), and named Veterans Memorial Building. In addition to a concert hall, seating 2300 persons, space was provided for state headquarters of certain veterans' organizations. The building was dedi-



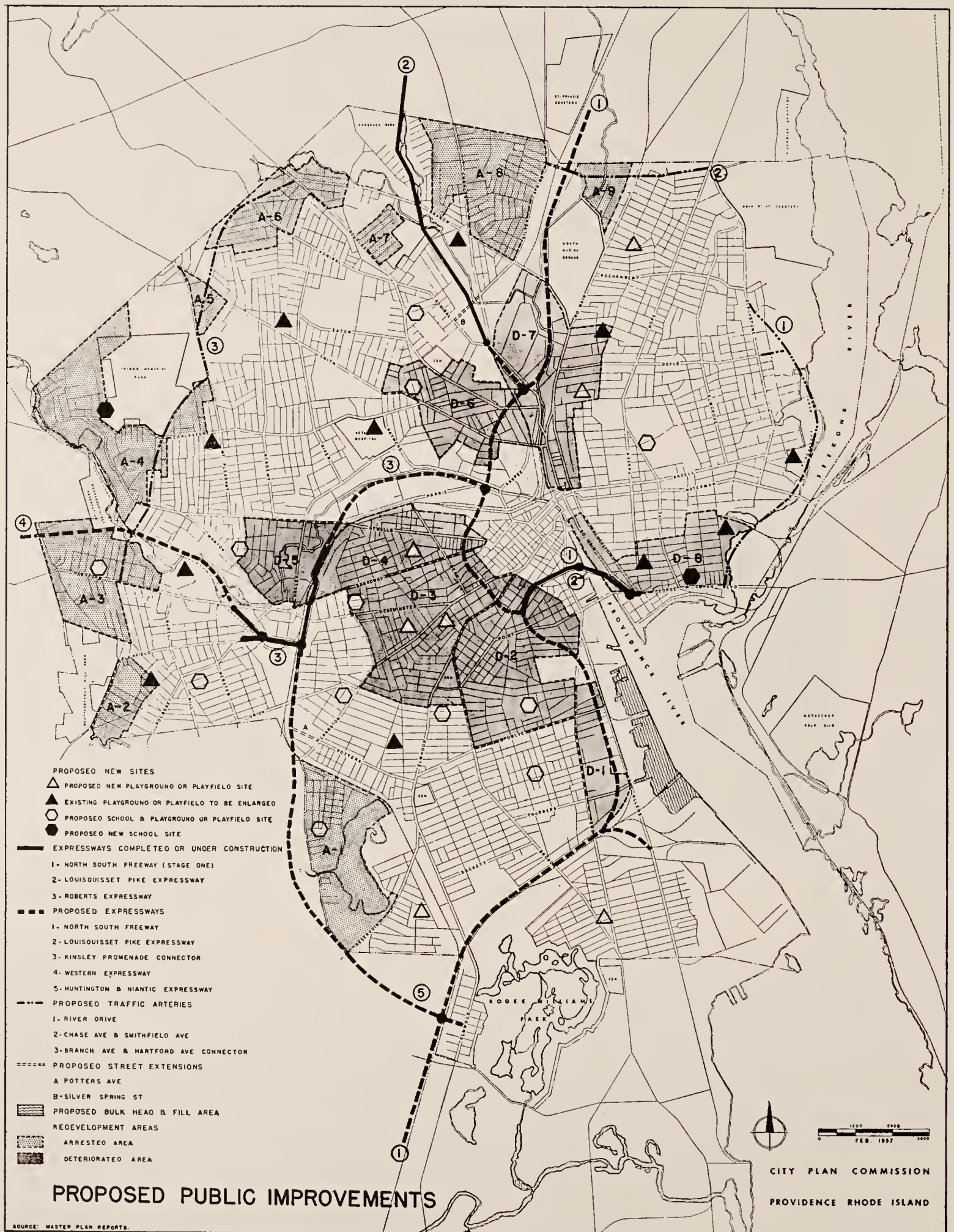
Brook Street Fire Station, 1950

cated by Governor John O. Pastore January 27, 1950 and the first concert in the auditorium was given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra January 31, 1951.²³

Public school enrollment dropped from 40,103 in 1940 to 26,327 in 1950 and during that period 14 of the schoolhouses were closed. The only construction project was the rebuilding of the Point Street School (page 150) which had been badly damaged by fire January 4, 1940. Plans were underway in 1950 for a new Fox Point elementary school.²⁴ Athletic fields were constructed at Mount Pleasant and Hope senior high schools, the former equipped with bleachers (Cull and Robinson, architects).

23. The auditorium succeeded Metropolitan Theatre (page 265) as the city's principal music hall.

24. Fox Point School (Cull and Robinson, architect), erected on Tockwotton Park estate (page 278), was opened in 1954.



Courtesy of City Plan Commission

During the war years there arose a nation-wide interest in post-war planning, a movement which was sponsored locally by the Providence Chamber of Commerce in the creation of a Civic Planning and Traffic Board under chairmanship of Frederick W. Aldred in 1942.²⁵ That board, by engagement of a traffic engineer, the organization of committees and the release of public information, succeeded in awakening a hitherto apathetic City Council to the need for long-range planning, resulting in the passage of a revised city planning ordinance July 20, 1944, superseding the ordinance of 1913 (page 219) under which the commission had worked.²⁶ It set up a City Plan Commission, comprising the mayor, two council members and five lay-members,²⁷ for the purpose of giving advice and assistance to departments of the city administration and to the public of the community. Offices were established in City Hall and funds were budgeted for the organization of a technical staff charged with the development of the various elements of a master plan for the city. Frank H. Malley was appointed director in 1945.

In addition to its basic studies of population growth, land use, public school sites, downtown parking and other elements, the commission, by the year 1951, had three major accomplishments to its credit. The master plan for the redevelopment of residential areas²⁸ provided a basis for operations of the Redevelopment Agency; its draft of a new zoning ordinance²⁹ was given final approval by the council and was signed by Mayor Reynolds September 21, 1951, superseding the ordinance of 1923 (page 233); and its master plan of thoroughfares³⁰ was established as a basis for expressway projects, two decades after the Whitten plan (page 242) had been abandoned.

The Redevelopment Agency was created in 1948³¹ under requirements of Chapter 1269 of the Ordinances of 1944 and with the provisions contained in the State Community Redevelopment Act of 1946, with condemnation powers for the clearance of slums to provide sites for parks, playgrounds, public and private housing, commercial use, industrial sites and other purposes. Of the several areas included in the City Plan Commission's report two were given special study by the agency, including a project for the erection of elevator-apartments overlooking a river parkway in the South Main Street section and an industrial development in the Point Street vicinity.³²

25. Aldred was succeeded as chairman by Edward Winsor in 1945, Robert F. Shepard in 1948, Harold G. Morris in 1952 and F. Morris Cochran in 1955. Joseph E. Vance was director. A monthly pamphlet, *News and Views*, was issued commencing in May, 1945.

26. The original City Plan Commission transmitted its 30th and final report in 1943. Its membership at that time included five *ex-officio* members and four lay members, the latter comprising Royal B. Farnum, Thomas F. Farrell, Edwin E. Cull and Cady, chairman.

27. The members of the new commission, appointed by the mayor, included George Hurley, chairman, Hovey T. Freeman, Royal B. Farnum, Lucio E. Carlone and Paul A. SanSouci. Councilmen John W. Moakler, Jr. and Henry J. McLaughlin were elected council members, in addition to Mayor Roberts. Edward Winsor succeeded as chairman in 1953.

28. City Plan Commission, Publication No. 5, 1946.

29. *Ibid*, Publication No. 6, 1949.

30. *Ibid*, Publication No. 3, 1946.

31. The agency was composed of Chester R. Martin, chairman, Albert Harkness, John R. Crawford, Edward M. Mauro, Morris S. Waldman, Louis B. Wetmore, executive director, and H. Clinton Owen, secretary.

32. Neither of these projects had been consummated by 1955. Redevelopment activities were temporarily suspended pending a court action, started in 1951, arising from the industrial redevelopment project and questioning the validity of the state redevelopment law. The first project to get under way was the Willard Center Redevelopment in South Providence, started in 1955, including the removal of old tenements to be replaced by a new elementary school, a shopping center and a park. Other projects under consideration in that year included the West River Industrial Redevelopment, an 80-acre area north of Randall Square, and the Mount Hope Urban Renewal Project in the Lippitt Hill area east of North Main Street.

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

Following recommendations made in the City Plan Commission's thoroughfare report specific studies were undertaken by state and city authorities. The State Public Works Department announced in 1947 a \$52 million freeway project for the Providence area, including a 12-mile expressway,³³ for completion in 1960. The City Council approved in that year a plan for by-passing Olneyville Square. Other projects for traffic relief included new highway surfaces, revised patterns of rotaries and traffic lanes, new parking areas, and the future construction of grade separations (see map, page 280).

A rotary, planned by State Public Works Director Philip S. Mancini, was established in the Pershing Square area, north of the union station, including a portion of the public garden land.³⁴ It involved a revision of the lines of Gaspee Street and other highways, the construction of a new Gaspee Street bridge and the closing of sections of Francis and Promenade streets, and included a large landscaped parking lot within its perimeter.³⁵

The first project to be undertaken in the master highway program was the Olneyville expressway, designed to eliminate the bottleneck at Olneyville Square (page 121). Construction work, started in 1949, included a by-pass south of the square, with grade separations, connecting Hartford Avenue, Pocasset Avenue and Plainfield Street on the west with Huntington Avenue, Westminster Street, Broadway and Harris Avenue on the east.³⁶

At the half-century mark the pollution of Narragansett bay had increased to an alarming extent.³⁷ Remedial measures were underway, however, which were designed to cleanse the waters within a few years. Anti-pollution laws were passed by the General Assembly in 1947, largely through efforts of a Pollution Abatement Committee. A Blackstone Valley Authority was created which commenced the erection of a \$15 million sewage disposal plant, financed by bond issues, intended to curb the pollution of Seekonk and Moshassuck rivers in their flow through Providence. During ensuing years the construction and improvement of sewerage systems was gradually undertaken in East Providence, Warren, Bristol, Newport, Cranston, Howard (State Institutions), East Greenwich, Quonset, Kingston and Westerly. Providence commenced the erection of a new disposal plant at Field's Point, scheduled for completion in 1958.³⁸ These activities were stimulated by a

33. A section of the north-south expressway was started in 1955, extending from Beacon Avenue to George M. Cohan Boulevard and including a Providence river bridge overpassing Eddy, Dyer and South Water streets with a system of highway approaches on both shores. It eliminated the Dyer Street docks, Burnside Square, and several lanes west of South Main Street including once-famed Chicken-foot alley.

34. The public garden (page 203) included three isolated blocks in the area between the railroad station, Gaspee, Stillman and Promenade streets, dedicated to park purposes in 1904. Plans for its development were submitted by the plan commission in 1915 but were not adopted (page 219). In 1918, by special legislative act, a fire alarm building was erected on the southerly block. The other blocks were temporarily landscaped in 1922, and later used for free parking of automobiles.

35. The rotary was completed in 1952. Other projects of the 1950s included the erection of traffic islands in the Market Square, Memorial Square and Exchange Place areas. Another parking lot was established in the former freight yard, east of Stillman Street, by arrangement with the railroad company.

36. The first leg in the expressway was opened August 26, 1952 and dedicated as Dennis J. Roberts Expressway. Roberts retired as mayor of Providence January 2, 1951 and was inaugurated governor of Rhode Island the same day; he was succeeded as mayor by Walter H. Reynolds.

37. The Pollution Information Committee reported (1952) that an estimated billion gallons of sewage, industrial waste and oil was being deposited weekly in Narragansett bay. The Public Health Service, Northeastern Drainage Office, recorded (1951) extensive damage to all types of shellfish operations and wildlife habitat in the upper bay area.

38. An estimated 50 million gallons of very poorly treated Providence sewage was being dumped daily from the 1931 plant (page 256) into Providence river, according to the Pollution Information Committee (1957).

campaign of publicity undertaken by a Pollution Information Committee headed by Harvey Flint.³⁹

Plans were under way in 1950-1951 for improving the open space between South Main and South Water streets in front of the Court House. The northerly half of the area, owned by the city and intended originally as a site for a hall of records (page 240) had subsequently been dedicated by the City Council as Henry B. Gardner, Jr. Memorial Park in honor of a Providence lawyer and naval officer who was killed in action in World War II. The southerly half, owned by the state, was designated by the General Assembly in 1951 as F. Ellis Jackson Memorial Park in honor of the Providence architect of the Court House who died February 9, 1950. The project included the layout of a broad walk on axis with the Court House, flanked on either side by a setting of oak trees (illustration, page 284), in substantial accordance with plans made by F. L. Ackerman in 1931 (page 258) and further developed by Jackson. A brick and slate memorial marker was placed in each of the parks. The landscape treatment was financed by private subscriptions sponsored by the Jackson Memorial Trust, an organization headed by Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe. The setting of oak trees was extended on the north side of College Street, beside the Market House, by the Rhode Island School of Design.

Toward the middle of the century architectural schools throughout the country were abandoning eclecticism and teaching only contemporary design. The principal exponent of the movement in Providence was the Rhode Island School of Design's division of architecture which had expanded, under direction of Philip D. Creer (1933-1956) from a preliminary college course to become a fully accredited school of architecture.⁴⁰ The effects of the new principles in architectural education, and the accent placed on organic design in architectural publications, were stimulating the modern transition in the city as exemplified by new public and private buildings designed with machine-age technique and the use of prefabricated materials.

Conservative Providence, however, was not yet ready to abandon its traditional styles altogether, as was apparent in ecclesiastical design. Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 445 Elmwood Avenue (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects, 1939, 1949), is Gothic, with a stone gabled-facade, surmounted by a cross, and stone buttresses projecting from brick side walls. Mathewson Street Methodist Church (page 190) underwent interior alterations, starting in 1950, and the lower stories of the facade were reconstructed with Gothic motives executed in cast stone (Arland A. Dirlam of Boston, architect). A Romanesque sanctuary and tower were added in 1951 to Washington Park Methodist Church (erected in 1915) at the corner of Alabama Avenue and Broad Street. In contrast with these buildings is the ultra-modern Temple Beth El on Orchard Avenue, succeeding the former Broad Street synagogue (page 211). The new building (Percival Goodman of New York, architect, 1951-54) constitutes a community center and includes a temple, a theatre and school facilities. The exterior walls are fabricated in a simple manner with yellow brick, limestone and glass, and the roof is flat except for an arched section over the temple (illustration, page 285).

39. The committee reported in June, 1957, a significant cleansing of the waters of Narragansett bay; a more complete purification was anticipated after completion of the Field's Point plant and the construction of a proposed sewerage system in Woonsocket.

40. The Division of Architecture, of which Professor Albert E. Simonson was appointed chairman in 1956, had added planning to its curriculum and was in active cooperation with the city plan commissions of Providence and Pawtucket, the Rhode Island Development Council and the Redevelopment Agency.



R.I.H.S.

Market Square area, 1952, showing Providence County Court House (1933), and memorial parks as developed 1951.

1940 - 1950

Among the new downtown buildings there are examples of both traditional and modern design. The Providence Washington Insurance Building (illustration, page 286) at 20 Washington Place⁴¹ (Perry, Shaw and Hepburn, architects, 1949) and the Firemen's Mutual Insurance Building at 150 South Main Street⁴² (Cram and Ferguson, architects, 1953), both have Classic motives and steeples. A Weybosset Street extension of the Providence National Bank Building (page 247), conforms to the Early Republican design of the Westminster Street facade (Howe and Church, architects, 1950). Modern design is reflected in the six-story marble and glass fronts of the Peoples Savings Bank⁴³ at 145 Westminster Street and 70 Exchange Place (Cram and Ferguson, architects, 1948) and the W. T. Grant Department Store⁴⁴ at 260 Westminster Street (Leland and Larson of Boston, architects, 1948).



Temple Beth El, 1951-54, 70 Orchard Avenue.

An addition to the Providence Public Library (page 187) on Empire Street (Howe, Prout and Ekman, architects, 1950-54) has simple wall surfaces of limestone with marble trimmings, in contrast to the Renaissance motives of the main building, opened in 1900⁴⁵

41. By City Council resolution the section of Waterman Street, west of North Main, was re-named Washington Place upon completion of the building. The insurance company's former building at 20 Market Square (originally What Cheer Block, page 124), was demolished in 1956 to provide a parking lot for the School of Design.

42. Erected on the site of Infantry Hall (page 154).

43. The former bank building on Market Square (page 228) was sold to the School of Design and was still standing in 1957.

44. Erected on the site of Low's Opera House (page 160).

45. Clarence E. Sherman succeeded William E. Foster (page 187) as librarian in 1930 and was succeeded by his son, Stuart C. Sherman, in 1957. The addition terminated a series of attempts by the library corporation, during a span of 25 years, to provide additional facilities.

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

(page 187). A small Mount Pleasant Branch Library of modern design (Harkness and Geddes, architects) was erected on Academy Avenue in 1948-49, replacing Sprague House branch on Armington Avenue (page 252).

Quite a number of commercial buildings were built in neighborhood business areas during this period, including branches of banking institutions, insurance offices and shops. These buildings, with few exceptions, were of contemporary design. In the Elmwood section several large 19th century houses were razed for the business development and were replaced by the Industrial Trust Company branch at 582 Elmwood Avenue (Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects, 1947), Rhode Island Co-op Store at 544 Elmwood Avenue (Chapman and Evans of New York, architects, 1948), United Public Market at 541 Elmwood Avenue (Samuel Lerner Associates, architects, 1949) and the Providence Institution for Savings branch at 520 Elmwood Avenue (Harkness and Geddes, architects,



Providence Washington Insurance Building, 1949. The tower is flanked by the World War Memorial (1927) left, and First Baptist Steeple (1775), right.

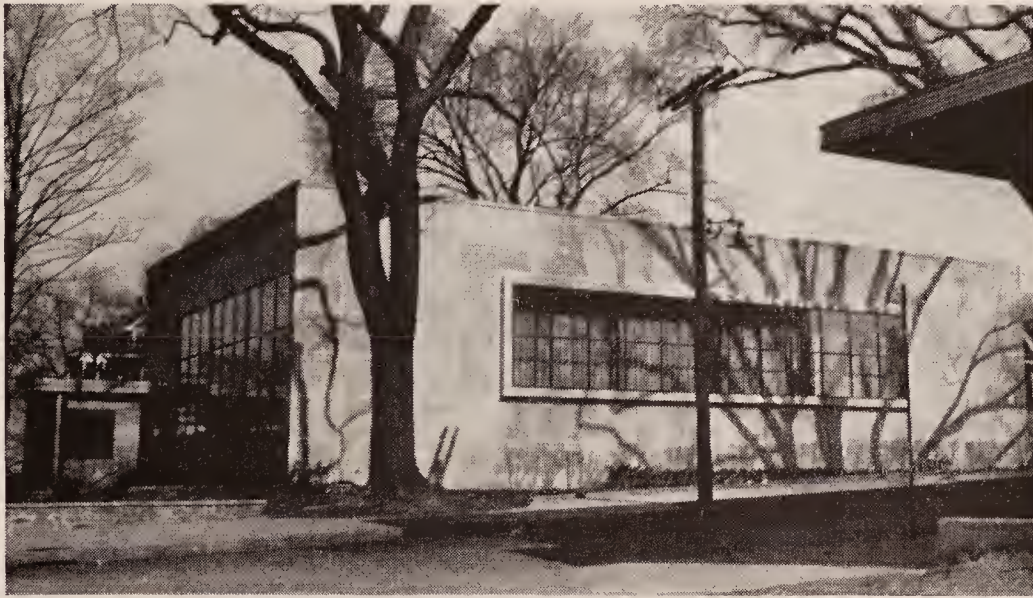
1949, illustration, page 287). In the Wayland Square vicinity the business development, started in the thirties, was expanded with the erection of several one-story and two-story buildings, including the all-glass-front Gladding's Department Store branch (Philip D. Creer, architect) and the Colonial-type Providence National Bank branch (Henry Markoff, architect) on Angell Street; American Universal Insurance Building (Samuel Lerner Associates, architects) and the Liberty Mutual Building (Philip Franklin Eddy, architect) on Wayland Avenue; and the Wayland Medical Building (Samuel Lerner Associates, architects) at 225 Waterman Street. The modern architectural trend was conspicuous in new commercial buildings erected in other neighborhood centers including Olneyville Square, Federal Hill (Atwells Avenue), Mount Pleasant (Chalkstone Avenue), Smith Street (between Orms and Chalkstone), Washington Park (Broad Street), the Hope-Rochambeau area, and sections of Thayer Street.

1940 - 1950

While industry retained a foothold in many areas of the city the general construction trend was toward the south end, where modern plants provided a striking contrast with the factories of the 19th century (pages 171-174).⁴⁶

Private residential design in post-war years ranged all the way from Colonial traditions to modern flat-roof, glass-walled types. Most of the new dwellings were between those extremes, including the "bungalow" on small lots and the "ranch house" on larger ones. The garage usually was incorporated as part of the house as noted at 270 Laurel Avenue (Samuel Lerner, architect, 1949, illustration, page 288). The greatest concentration of house construction was on plats in sections of the northwest part of the city. New residential plats also were recorded in the Blackstone Boulevard area on the upper East Side, including a portion of the Butler Hospital estate (page 119) and sections of Swan Point Cemetery property on the west side of the boulevard.

During the decade of the 1940s Providence decreased slightly in population to 248,674 while the state increased substantially to 791,896, as revealed by the United States census of 1950. This trend had been foreseen by the City Plan Commission with the observation



Elmwood branch, Providence Institution for Savings, 1949, 520 Elmwood Avenue.

that "urban areas are changing in character from one thickly populated central city to a group of satellite cities around a central city."⁴⁷

Providence was built up nearly to the limit of its 18.91 square miles, affording little room for an expanded population. The city was encircled by its satellite communities of Cranston, Johnston, North Providence, Pawtucket and East Providence whose aggregate area was four and one-half times that of Providence, with large extents of land awaiting development. Workers in Providence offices and factories were moving to the suburbs where large-scale house-building activities had been underway for some years, as reflected by the population increase in those towns.⁴⁸

46. The southerly trend continued in the 1950s, particularly in the Allen's Avenue area.

47. City Plan Commission, Publication No. 1, 1945.

48. According to the U. S. census of 1950 Providence had decreased 2.3% since 1940 and its satellite communities had increased as follows: Pawtucket 7.1%, East Providence 11.3%, North Providence 13.5%, Cranston 17.1%, and Johnston 19.3%.

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

In 1950 Providence was entering a period of transition. Its civic growth was now programmed in accordance with a master plan that was destined to effect significant changes in the map of the city and its environs. Slum-clearance projects and large-scale housing operations already had improved the standards of living. Under the new zoning plan better facilities were afforded for an advantageous land use, new residential districts were emerging from areas of obsolescence, and business and industrial areas were becoming more clearly and logically defined.

The condemnation of private property for expressways, redevelopment projects and other public improvements, already under way throughout the city, was destined to eliminate not only hundreds of sub-standard buildings and dwellings but many landmarks of architectural and historic importance. The East Side, which had escaped a business invasion by reason of the steep hillside approach from downtown, was now being subjected to physical changes effected by Brown's expansion projects, involving the sacrifice of whole blocks of houses.



270 Laurel Avenue, 1949.

It was in the old section of the Neck, on which the proprietors' lots originally were located (page 10), that the greatest opportunity was offered for perpetuating the architectural heritage and traditions of Providence. That area, about one-half of a square mile in extent, was rich in the relics of history. Physical traces of the early town were still preserved in the pattern of streets, many of which bore the names of early settlers. Historic spots were memorialized by monuments and markers.

The tangible links with the past were the many architectural survivals from the 18th and early 19th centuries, including three churches, a half-dozen school and college buildings, the Colony House, and over 200 dwellings. While some of the mansions of historic and architectural distinction were being maintained as museums, libraries and clubs, most of them continued as private residences. The old houses, as a rule, had been rehabilitated and were well-preserved. Only in the south and northwest borderline areas were evidences of deterioration and neglect, and even in those neighborhoods the intrinsic charm of the sturdy old dwellings reflected the atmosphere of bygone days.

1940 - 1950

The evidence of a city's past is an asset for its future. The preservation of the Colonial and Early Republican architecture of Old Providence, and the restoration and renewal of its neglected neighborhoods, would stimulate an appreciation of the city's venerable age and capitalize its heritage.

* * * * *

In 1956 the Providence Preservation Society was organized "for the encouragement of protecting, improving and making proper use of our historic sites and buildings." Following its incorporation the preparation of a plan was undertaken by the City Council, with the society's sponsorship and cooperation, for the rehabilitation of the Old Providence area with the ultimate purpose of preserving the best of the city's past glory and renewing its historic neighborhoods. Under another project the Council initiated a plan for downtown rehabilitation. Federal grants for both plans were provided under the Urban Renewal Administration.

A bright future was in the offing for Weybosset Side and the Neck, the former dedicated to a modern business development and the latter preserving a measure of its architectural and historic heritage.



R.I.H.S.

A section of Old Providence on John Street

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